DEBATE

ON THE

ABOLITION

OF THE

SLAVE-TRADE.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

THE DEBATE ON A *MOTION* FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE, IN THE *HOUSE OF COMMONS*, ON MONDAY AND TUESDAY, APRIL 18 AND 19, 1791, *REPORTED IN DETAIL.*

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JOHN
Bodl.
JOHNSON

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It would equally exhauſt his own ſtrength, and the patience of his hearers, if he were to attempt to go at large into the diſcuſſion of the various particulars, which preſented themſelves to his mind; at preſent, therefore, he ſhould do no more than juſt touch on the leading topics. He hoped Gentlemen would argue

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the matter with him point by point, being ſure that the more diſtinct and complete the diſcuſſion ſhould be, the more clearly and irrefragably it would appear that truth and reaſon were on his ſide. He had long looked forward, he owned, to this day, with ſome degree of impatience, as what would afford him the opportunity of diſpelling the prejudices, and correcting the miſrepreſentations which had gone forth; but beſides that he had ever felt that this was the propereſt time and place for him to meet them, and to convince the world that in undertaking and perſiſting in his preſent purſuit, he had not been influenced by any unworthy feelings of a perſonal nature, he had alſo been determined to remain ſilent by another conſideration: for though he had been ſometimes a little roughly handled by anonymous aſſailants, it was a tribute of juſtice he gladly paid to ſome of thoſe gentlemen, by whom he had been moſt ſtrenuouſly oppoſed both on this and the other ſide of the Atlantic, to acknowledge that he had been treated by *them* with the utmoſt candour and liberality: theſe were proofs of the liberality of their minds, and highly gratifying to his own feelings; he hoped, alſo, he might draw from them a good omen to his cauſe, and derive a hope that, in the iſſue, they might all rejoice together in the happineſs which would reſult from the ſucceſs of it. In the ſame manner he wiſhed to diſcuſs the ſubject, frankly indeed, but with fairneſs and moderation; he called on the Houſe to do the ſame, and ſaid, he truſted that the preſent Debate, inſtead of exciting aſperity and confirming prejudice, would tend to produce a general conviction of the truth of what, in fact, was incontrovertible, THAT THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE WAS INDISPENSIBLY REQUIRED OF THEM, NOT ONLY BY RELIGION AND MORALITY, BUT BY EVERY PRINCIPLE OF SOUND POLICY.——He concluded his opening by earneſtly imploring the Houſe to favour him with it's moſt ſerious attention on the moſt important queſtion, on which a Houſe of Commons had ever been called on to decide.

The firſt point, Mr. Wilberforce ſaid, to which he wiſhed to direct the attention of the Committee, was *the manner in which the Slaves were obtained on the Coaſt of* AFRICA. In order to be convinced of the truth of all his allegations on this head, it would

would be merely neceſſary to apply unqueſtionable principles of general reaſoning to the particular circumſtances of the caſe before them. That vaſt country was divided into various communities of different ſizes, ſome governed by kings more or leſs abſolute, others, and thoſe the greater number, by elders. Their ſtate of civilization was in general very imperfect, their notions of morality extremely rude, and the powers of their governments ill defined: it was natural therefore to imagine, that when the kings or chieftains ſhould be tempted by the preſſing ſolicitations of appetite to acts of injuſtice or oppreſſion, they would not be ſlow to the commiſſion of them; and temptations of this kind were continually held out to them by the European Traders: the effects of theſe were to be traced in every ſpecies of fraud and violence, whilſt they, who ought to have been the guardians and protectors, were thus made the ravagers of their country. The ſame cauſes might be expected to produce the ſame conſequences throughout the whole ſociety; the ſeeds of diſunion and diſorder would every where be ſown, every man would dread in a neighbour to meet with an enemy, and diſtruſt and inſecurity would univerſally prevail; the fountain of juſtice alſo would be poiſoned, and be changed into a ſource of oppreſſion. Theſe ſpeculations, founded on the principles of human nature and verified by the experience of all ages, accorded in all reſpects with the moſt authentic accounts that had heretofore been publiſhed of the Continent of Africa, which were now confirmed by a vaſt body of teſtimony of the moſt ſatisfactory and unexceptionable ſort.

He begged the Committee would advert to the characters, ſituations, and means of information, of the witneſſes, to whom he was now alluding: they were of various deſcriptions, ſome of them officers in his Majeſty's ſervice; others, men of ſcience, who had viſited the country from motives of curioſity; others again, who had themſelves been concerned in the Slave Trade, and whoſe prejudices might have been ſuppoſed to be in favour of its continuance; ſeveral of them had poſſeſſed the moſt ample opportunities of intelligence; ſome had been many hundred miles up the rivers into the interior country. The teſtimony of theſe ſeveral witneſſes embraced the whole of that vaſt

extent of country to which we reſorted for the purchaſe of ſlaves, and from one end of it to the other, it eſtabliſhed, beyond contradiction, the exiſtence of thoſe acts of fraud, oppreſſion, rapine, and murder, which he had charged on the Slave Trade.

To begin with the River Senegal, the northern extremity of the diſtrict referred to, Captain Wilſon and Captain Hills of his Majeſty's Navy, and Mr. Dalrymple of the Land Service, being at the Iſland of Goree, had an opportunity of making obſervations in that quarter. On the arrival of the ſlave-ſhips, armed parties were regularly ſent out in the evening, who ſcoured the neighbouring country, and brought in their prey in the night: theſe wretched victims were to be ſeen in the morning bound back to back in the huts on the ſhore, whence they were conveyed, tied hand and foot, on board the ſlave-ſhips. The object of theſe ravages, if it had wanted any confirmation, was eſtabliſhed beyond a doubt by this circumſtance, that when the Slave-Trade was ſtopped, the expeditions alſo ceaſed. Mr. Kiernan ſpoke of the conſtant depredations committed by the Moors, of which, as well as of ſuch expeditions as had been mentioned by Captain Hills, the Committee heard alſo from Mr. Wadſtrom, who had noted down, at the time, the tranſactions of every day in a journal which he had produced before the Committee, and whoſe curious and intereſting relation, he could not doubt, had attracted the attention of every Gentleman who had looked into the evidence; and theſe ravages, excited by preſents of brandy, gunpowder, and ſuch other incentives, and by the conditional promiſe of larger ſupplies, were not only carried on by one community againſt another, but the kings were ſtimulated to commit them in their own territories, on their own ſubjects; and, in one inſtance, a chieftain, who, in the moments of intoxication, could not reſiſt the preſſing calls of appetite, had expreſſed, in an interval of reaſon, a due ſenſe of the enormity of his own proceedings, and had poured forth his reproaches on his Chriſtian ſeducers. Abundant alſo were the inſtances of private rapine: individuals were kidnapped whilſt in their fields and in their gardens; there was an univerſal feeling of diſtruſt and apprehenſion: the natives never went any diſtance from home without being armed, and when aſked the rea-

ſon by Captain Wilſon, pointed to a ſlave-ſhip then lying within ſight. Theſe tranſactions might be parallelled by others of a ſort exactly ſimilar throughout every part of the Slave-Coaſt; and he thought it perfectly unneceſſary for him to treſpaſs on the time and patience of Gentlemen, by attempting to enumerate them.

Purſuing their progreſs ſouthward, they came to the Windward Coaſt; where, from the evidence of Lieutenant Story and Mr. Bowman, they would find all the fore-mentioned evils exiſting, if poſſible, in a ſtill higher degree: they would ſee the remains of villages that had been burnt, whilſt the fields of corn were ſtill ſtanding beſide them, and every other trace of recent deſolation. Here an agent was ſent to eſtabliſh a ſettlement in the interior country, and to ſend down to the ſhips ſuch ſlaves as he might be able to obtain; the orders he received from his captain were a very model of conciſeneſs and perſpicuity; "*he was to encourage the chieftains by brandy and gunpowder to go to war and make ſlaves.*" He punctually performed his part, the chieftains were not backward in their's; the neighbouring villages were ranſacked, being ſurrounded and ſet on fire in the night; their inhabitants were ſeiſed when making their eſcape, and being brought in to the agent, were by him forwarded, men, women, and children, to his principal on the coaſt. Mr. How, a botaniſt, who, in the ſervice of government, viſited that country with Captain Thompſon, gave in evidence, that being at one of the ſubordinate ſettlements on the Gold Coaſt, on the arrival of an order for ſlaves from Cape Coaſt Caſtle, the native Chief immediately ſent forth his armed parties, who, in the night, brought in a ſupply of all deſcriptions, and the neceſſary aſſortment was next day ſent off according to the order. But Mr. Wilberforce would not tire the attention of the Committee; the whole extent of the African coaſt furniſhed but one dull, dry, uniform detail of ſimilar inſtances of barbarity. There would be no end of multiplying particular caſes, he would therefore only mention one or two more, leſs for their own ſakes than for the concluſion that was to be drawn from them. When Captain Hills was in the River Gambia, happening accidentally to mention to a black pilot, who was in the boat with him, that he wanted

a cabin

a cabin-boy, the pilot told him he would ſoon obtain him one; and, accordingly ſome youths being on the ſhore with vegetables to ſell, he beckoned to them to come on board, at the ſame time by winks and ſignificant geſtures giving Captain Hills to underſtand that he might then take his choice; and when Captain Hills rejected the propoſal with indignation, the pilot ſeemed perfectly at a loſs to account for his warmth, and dryly obſerved, that the Slave-Captains would not have been ſo ſcrupulous. There was, however, another tranſaction that he muſt diſtinctly ſtate, not only on account of its enormous magnitude, but alſo becauſe it eſtabliſhed, beyond all controverſy, the frequency of theſe acts of rapine, which was the concluſion he had before referred to. When General Rooke, a reſpectable Member of that Houſe, was commanding in his Majeſty's ſettlement at Goree, ſome of the ſubjects of a neighbouring king, with whom he was on terms of amity, had come to pay him a friendly viſit; there were from 100 to 150 of them, men, women, and children; all was gaiety and merriment; it was a ſcene to gladden the ſaddeſt, and to ſoften the hardeſt heart: but a Slave-Captain, ever faithful to the intereſts of his employers, is not ſo ſoon thrown off his guard; with what aſtoniſhment would the Committee hear, that in the midſt of this feſtivity, it was propoſed to General Rooke to ſeize the whole of this unſuſpecting multitude, hurry them on board the ſhips, and carry them off to the Weſt Indies. Was there ever a man bold enough to venture on ſuch a propoſal? Not one only, but three! three Engliſh Slave-Captains preferred it as their joint requeſt, alledging the precedent of a former Governor! If in the annals of human wickedneſs an inſtance of fouler treachery were to be found, Mr. Wilberforce was happy to be ignorant of it. But it was not on account of its magnitude that he wiſhed to impreſs it on the Committee, ſo much as becauſe it was a pregnant proof of the frequency of the acts of rapine he had before deſcribed; for what muſt be the habits of the Slave-Trade, what muſt have been *the familiarity* with ſcenes of depredation produced on the minds of the Slave-Captains, when three of them durſt not only meditate within themſelves, not only confer on with one another, but bring into the light of day, and carry to a

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Britiſh Officer of rank, a propoſal which one would have thought too horrid to be allowed for a ſingle moment, even in the deepeſt retirement, in the darkeſt receſſes of the moſt depraved heart. This would ſtand in the place of a thouſand particular inſtances; This argued a foregone concluſion, and gave colour and credibility, if requiſite, to every other act of violence ſtated in evidence before the Committee; he would therefore now confine himſelf to a proof or two of a circumſtantial nature, a ſpecies of evidence which was frequently even more ſatisfactory than the moſt unexceptionable poſitive teſtimony. The Committee, perhaps, was not aware that the uſual proportion of children on board the ſlave-ſhips on moſt parts of the coaſt was one-third of the whole cargo, and ſcarce ever leſs than one-fourth: on the Gold Coaſt the latter was the moſt ordinary proportion. It appeared from the evidence of one of their opponents' witneſſes, who had reſided there many years, that the only way in which children could be brought into that ſituation, was by whole families being ſold when the principals were condemned for witchcraft, and at the ſame time it was ſaid that the number of perſons convicted of this crime was extremely ſmall indeed, and that the younger part of a family in theſe caſes was often ſpared; thus every *legal* avenue by which theſe poor creatures could be brought into the clutches of the Slave-Captains, was ſhut up by their opponents' own declarations; and irreſiſtible confirmation was afforded to the poſitive teſtimony of the witneſſes he had called, that in theſe very parts of the Coaſt the kidnapping of children very generally prevailed. But it was not only by acts of outrage that theſe poor creatures were brought into bondage, but, as he had ſaid before, every other poſſible mode was reſorted to, and in particular the adminiſtration of juſtice was turned into an engine for that end: the ſmalleſt crimes were puniſhed by a fine equal to the value of one or more ſlaves, which, if the party was unable to pay, he was himſelf to be ſold into ſlavery. Crimes were fabricated, falſe accuſations and convictions were reſorted to, and perſons ſometimes employed to ſeduce the unwary to the commiſſion of crimes with a view to the conviction and ſale of the culprit. It was another effect

of

of this trade, which he thought well worthy of being remarked on, that it corrupted the moral principle of those who carried it on; every possible fraud was put in practice to deceive the ignorance of the natives, by false weights and measures, adulterated commodities, and other impositions of a like sort: these were even acknowledged by many who had themselves practised them in obedience to the orders of their superiors. He enlarged a little on this topic, and called on all who were interested, for the honour of the mercantile character, to renounce and put an end to a traffic, which, ever faithful to its own character, was as contemptible for its meanness, as it was hateful for its cruelty. It was a circumstance by no means to be omitted, though he had failed to observe it in its proper place, that the Gentlemen of the West Indies acknowledged with great candour, that slaves were often obtained in the unwarrantable modes he had mentioned; he quoted the declaration of the Jamaica Committee, That the African trade was no trade of their's, and particularly specified Mr. Ottley, whose name he could never mention but with respect, declaring that this was not the language of compliment, but the sincere sentiment of his heart; he hoped also Governor Parry's letter, in which he spoke of the nefarious practice of the African trade, on which Mr. Wilberforce had enlarged on a former occasion, was still fresh in the memory of the Committee: but there was one authority of so respectable a description, that he should be highly wanting to his cause were he not to adduce it; it was the declaration of a Gentleman of great ability and information, as well as of uncommon candour and liberality of mind; the Committee would anticipate the name of Mr. Edwards: that Gentlemen, in a very eloquent speech delivered in the House of Assembly in Jamaica, against the Propositions moved by Mr. Wilberforce in the last Parliament, frankly expressed himself in the following terms; * "*I am persuaded, that Mr. Wilberforce has* "*been very rightly informed as to the manner in which slaves are* "*generally procured. The intelligence I have collected from my* "*own negroes, abundantly confirms Mr. Wilberforce's account;*

* Page 13.

and

" *and I have not the ſmalleſt doubt, that in Africa, the effects of* " *this trade are preciſely ſuch as he repreſents them to be. Sir,* " *the whole, or the greateſt part, of that immenſe continent is a* " *field of warfare and deſolation; a wilderneſs in which the in-* " *habitants are wolves towards each other. That this ſcene of* " *oppreſſion, fraud, treachery, and blood, if not originally occa-* " *ſioned, is* IN PART *(I will not ſay* WHOLLY*) upheld by the* " *Slave Trade, I dare not diſpute. Every man in the Sugar* " *Iſlands may be convinced that it is ſo, who will enquire of any* " *African Negroes, on their firſt arrival, concerning the circum-* " *ſtance of their captivity. The aſſertion that a great many of* " *theſe are criminals and convicts, is mockery and inſult.*"

Yet theſe things, however clearly proved by poſitive teſtimony, by the conceſſion of opponents, by particular inference, by general reaſoning, by the moſt authentic hiſtories of Africa, by the experience of all countries and of all ages, theſe things, and even their poſſibility, were denied by many reſpectable perſons, who have been brought forward on the preſent occaſion, as evidence to ſupport the continuance of the Slave Trade: they were chiefly perſons who had been Governors of Forts in Africa, or who had long commanded ſhips in the Trade. So ſoon as he had known the deſcription of the witneſſes whom it was intended to call, Mr. Wilberforce had been prepared for the effects of much prejudice. It was natural to imagine perſons would be prepoſſeſſed in favour of the commerce they had been long carrying on, and perhaps their fathers before them; but all his apprehenſions on this head had been greatly ſurpaſſed by the teſtimony they had given. He did not mean to impeach their private characters, but they certainly ſhewed themſelves under the influence of ſuch groſs prejudices as to render them incompetent judges of the ſubject they came forward to elucidate. They ſeemed, if he might ſo ſay, to be enveloped by a certain atmoſphere of their own, and to ſee, as it were, through a kind of *African medium*; every object that met their eyes, came diſtorted and turned from its true direction. Even the declarations made by themſelves, on other occaſions, ſeemed wholly new and ſtrange to them; they ſometimes forgot not only what they had ſeen, but what they had ſaid; and when to

one of them his own Teſtimony to the Privy Council was read, he miſtook it for that of another Gentleman, whoſe evidence he declared to be "the mereſt burleſque in the world." They altogether denied kidnapping or village breaking, or the falſe imputation of delinquencies. It was not merely that they declared that they had never been themſelves engaged in practices of this nature, which Mr. Wilberforce did not impute to them: they not only denied their actual exiſtence, but their very *poſſibility*. It was curious to obſerve how this ſame habit, when once contracted, could ſtick by a man in another ſituation; and he was not ſorry to have to exemplify it in the inſtance of a perſon whoſe private character he believed reſpectable. Mr. Barnes, ſince his return from Africa, had been engaged in the Wine Trade; and when examined a few years ago on the ſubject of the Wine Bill before the Houſe, he made a declaration exactly parallel to what he has now ſaid concerning the Slave Trade. "Will the propoſed Bill tend in any degree to pre-" vent the Adulteration of Wine?" "I do not ſee how it can, " but with that I am unacquainted, as I know nothing of the " adulteration of wine."—"I know nothing of kidnapping."—" I know nothing of the adulteration of wine."

But the Houſe muſt be aware that there was not only an African medium, but an *African logic* too: it ſeemed to be an acknowledged maxim in the logic of Africa, that every perſon who offered a ſlave for ſale had a right to ſell him. However fraudulent the manner might be in which the broker had obtained the ſlave, if they paid him a juſt price for him, all was right, it was a perfectly fair *bona fide* tranſaction. This was not a charge brought by the witneſſes for the Abolition merely, but was expreſsly and avowedly declared by many of the moſt experienced of the witneſſes againſt it, and denied by none: "It would have ſtopped my trade," ſaid one of them, "to have " aſked the broker how he came by the perſon he was offering " me for ſale." "We always ſuppoſe," ſaid another, "the " broker has a right to ſell the perſon he offers us." "I ne-" ver heard of ſuch a queſtion being aſked," ſaid a third, and in ſtill ſtronger terms, "a man would be thought a fool that " ſhould put ſuch a queſtion." Mr. Wilberforce hoped the

Houſe would be aware of the practical utility of this reaſoning. It was the key-ſtone that held the whole building together. By the help of this convenient principle, a Slave-Captain might go up and down the whole Coaſt of Africa, and ſee nothing but equity and juſtice; and the African Committee, repoſing on this grand maxim with perfect ſecurity, report gravely and formally that they had heard but of two inſtances of miſconduct in the ſpace of 40 years. The Slave-Captains, however, could not be altogether abſolved, even by availing themſelves to the full of this principle, excellent as it was; for depredations were frequently committed by the European Ships themſelves, eſpecially when they were paſſing by any part of the Coaſt where they did not mean to continue. Hence it was, that, as ſeveral Captains of the Navy, and others, had given in evidence, the Natives, who kept cautiouſly aloof from the Slave-Ships, would never come near the men of war, till fully ſatisfied they were not of the former deſcription; after which they laid aſide their fears, and came and continued on board with unſuſpecting chearfulneſs.

But Mr. Wilberforce would not detain the Committee any longer on this branch of the queſtion, adding, let us withdraw from this diſgraceful ſcene, and, in the words of an emphatic writer, "turn our eyes for relief to ſome ordinary wickedneſs." —But alas! no ſuch relief was yet to be enjoyed by them: on the contrary, a ſtill more dreadful ſcene was opening to their view; but he had deſcribed this part of the ſubject ſo much at large on a former occaſion, that he would ſpare the Committee the pain of dwelling long on it now. Let them but repreſent to themſelves a veſſel, in a ſultry climate, heaped to the very brim with theſe unhappy wretches, torn from their homes in the way he had deſcribed, and ignorant whither they were going. He ſcarce knew how to expreſs himſelf; he could only ſay, he was perſuaded that if the Committee could be tranſported where they might behold this dreadful ſpectacle, and after having taken a general ſurvey of its multifarious wretchedneſs, if they were then to liſten to each man's particular tale of ſorrow, they would want no other argument for the Abolition. It appeared from the evidence, that in the year 1788, at the very moment

when they were agitating this ſubject within the Walls of Parliament, all thoſe dreadful occurrences which he was deſcribing, were actually going forward on board the Slave-Ships; the ſame dancing in fetters, the ſame ſinging, the ſame eating by compulſion, the ſame deſpair, the ſame inſanity, and all the other abominations with which this Trade was characterized. New inſtances occurred, wherein theſe wretched men (eluding the vigilance of their perſecutors, who, knowing what they had to expect, had provided againſt it by the uſual high netting, that ſtanding precaution of an African Ship) threw themſelves into the Sea, and more than one, when in the act of drowning, were ſeen to wave their hands in triumph, exulting, to uſe the words of an eye-witneſs, "that they had *eſcaped.*" Yet theſe things, viewed through that African medium he had already named, took a different ſhape and colour. It was ſaid by an adverſe witneſs, Captain Knox, that he had no doubt "Slaves lie, during the night, *in tolerable comfort;*" now conſidering that they were coupled in fetters, and were often ſuffering under a diſorder, the effects of which were too nauſeous for deſcription, in order to correſpond with the Committee's ideas of tolerable comfort, it might ſeem requiſite that they ſhould at leaſt have room to lie on their backs: but how, in fact, were they ſometimes accommodated? In one of Captain Knox's own voyages, in a veſſel of 120 tons, he had 290 Slaves, and a ſpace which, according to his account, would have held 43 more, being otherwiſe occupied, the whole might be ſaid to contain 333; and with this proportion of men and tonnage, Captain Knox frankly declared, that perhaps they had not all the breadth of their backs. Yet, in another voyage, in a veſſel of 108 tons, he carried 450; and in a third, of from 130 to 150 tons, he carried 600 Slaves; neither ſhould it be forgotten, that the number of ſeamen being always increaſed in proportion to the Slaves, they alſo muſt have been more numerous in the two laſt voyages. What, in this ſituation, muſt have been the comfort of the Slaves, he left to the conſideration and feelings of the Committee. Another inſtance of this African ſelf-deception, was to be found on the records of the Committee, in the caſe of a Captain, of whom he had heard that he was one of the beſt

ever

ever engaged in that Trade, and of whom Mr. Wilberforce did not doubt, that, in any other ſituation, he would have been alive to the feelings of humanity: it had been aſſerted, that he had held hot coals to the mouth of a Slave, in order to compel him to eat; but being queſtioned on the circumſtance, not admitting, in the ſpirit of African logic, that *qui facit per alium facit per ſe*, he denied the charge with indignation. "I did not," ſaid he, "and I defy any body to prove that I did." "Did you never "*order* ſuch a thing to be done?" "Being ſick in my Cabin, "the chief mate and ſurgeon, at different times, informed me "that there was a man upon the main deck, that would neither "eat, drink, nor ſpeak: I deſired them to uſe every means in "their power to *perſuade* him to ſpeak, and aſſign reaſons for "his ſilence. I deſired them to make ſome of the other Slaves "endeavour to make him ſpeak: when I was informed he ſtill "remained obſtinate, and not knowing whether it was ſulki-"neſs or inſanity, I *ordered* the chief mate, or ſurgeon, or both, "to preſent him with a piece of fire in one hand, and a piece "of yam in the other, and to *let me know what effect that had* "*upon him*; it was reported to me, that he took the yam and "eat it, and threw the fire overboard." This, ſaid Mr. Wilberforce, is eating by *dureſſe*, if any thing can be called ſo; the Captain, however, triumphs in the ſucceſs of his expedient, and concludes his narrative by telling you that this very Slave was afterwards ſold for 40*l.* at Grenada. Mark here the moral of the tale, and learn the nature and the cure of ſulkineſs.

Mr. Wilberforce next remarked, that if there could be any aggravation of the injuries inflicted by the Europeans, on the inhabitants of this devoted land, it was afforded by conſidering who they were that were ſo treated, and what was their ſituation in their own country. So long had he been converſant with the whole of this great ſubject, that on every part of it a crowd of ideas ruſhed into his mind; he would endeavour, however, o to ſelect as to treſpaſs for as ſhort a time as poſſible on the patience of the Committee. One witneſs ſpoke of the acuteneſs of their capacities; another of the extent of their memory; a third of their genius for commerce; others of their good workmanſhip in gold, iron, and leather, the peculiarly excellent texture

of their cloth, and the beautiful and indelible tincture of the dyes; and it was acknowledged by all, that they ſupplied the ſhips with many articles of proviſion, with wood and water, and other neceſſaries; many ſpoke in high terms of their peaceable gentle diſpoſitions, of their chearfulneſs, of their hoſpitality; even thoſe who were nominally Slaves, lived a comfortable, happy life, were not liable to be puniſhed but for crimes, nor to be ſold without the form of a trial, nor in ſome parts without the verdict of a jury. When one of the opponents' witneſſes is aſked concerning their condition and treatment, he ſhews by his anſwer the impreſſion made on his mind; he deſcribes them as ſitting and eating with their maſters in the true ſtyle of patriarchal ſimplicity and comfort. Were theſe then a people incapable of complete civilization? It had been maintained, he knew, by ſome, that they were an inferior ſpecies; that they were even doomed by the Almighty to the ſufferings they underwent, and that we were merely the inſtruments of the divine vengeance. To thoſe who urge this argument ſeriouſly, it were not difficult to make a reply; though he acknowledged that the compatibility of natural and moral evil with the exiſtence of an all-powerful, all-wiſe, and all-merciful Governor of the world, was a myſtery beyond the reach of the human intellect. But in the mouths of thoſe, who, inſtead of ſubmitting with reluctance to the painful taſk of inflicting this puniſhment, courted and ſued for the employment, and turned it to the purpoſes of their private intereſt, it ſeemed to him to deſerve a very different treatment, and to be, indeed, nothing leſs than a groſs and impious blaſphemy.

Mr. Wilberforce obſerving now, on the whole of what he had ſtated, proceeded with ſaying, that he did not doubt of there being but one wiſh generally prevalent in the Houſe, concerning the Abolition of the Slave-Trade. He was aware, however, an opinion had gone forth, that the meaſure would be attended with infallible ruin to the Weſt India Iſlands. He truſted he ſhould prove that the direct contrary was the truth; but this, he muſt ſay, was more than any one, on any principles, had a right to require. For his own part, he confeſſed, that, conſidering the miſeries this Trade entailed on Africa, his liberty of

choice

choice was taken from him; he muſt, at all events, determine for the Abolition; but ſurely no man, however free he might deem himſelf to decide on grounds of expediency, would require more at his hands than that he ſhould ſhew the meaſure would not be abſolutely ruinous to the Weſt Indies. No petty, no dubious intereſt would, by any one, be ſtated as a ſufficient plea to juſtify the extenſive and certain evils he had enumerated. He would not detain the Committee for a moment, in arguing againſt the bringing of new lands into cultivation, by freſh importations of African Slaves; for even apart from every conſideration of juſtice and humanity, the impolicy of the meaſure was indiſputably clear. Let the Committee conſider the dreadful mortality that attended the opening of new lands; let them look to the evidence of Mr. Woolrich, and there ſee a contraſt drawn between the ſlow, perhaps, but ſure progreſs of cultivation, carried on in the natural way, and the attempt to force improvements, which, however flattering the proſpect at firſt, ſoon produced a load of debt and inextricable embarraſſments. He might even appeal to the enormous ſum, ſaid by the Weſt Indians themſelves to amount to more than 20,000,000*l*, owing to the people of this country; and challenge them, on any principles, to contend that any new ſyſtem would involve them ſo deep as that on which they had hitherto gone. But he would leave this head, referring the Committee to the evidence of Mr. Irving, a Gentleman, to whoſe abilities and merits the Houſe and the Country were no ſtrangers, one of the few men Mr. Wilberforce had known, who united great and accurate knowledge of detail, with a deep and comprehenſive view of the general principles of the commercial ſyſtem.—He called on the Houſe at large, and particularly on any Gentlemen of the Weſt Indies, who might be preſent, to liſten to him calmly and diſpaſſionately, and he was perſuaded they would rejoice as much as he could do, if he were able to make out his point. The grand baſis on which were bottomed all the objections of thoſe who maintained the contrary opinion, he apprehended to be this, That the ſtock of Slaves now in the Iſlands, could not be kept up by propagation, but that it was neceſſary, from time to time, to recruit them with imported Africans. In direct refuta-

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tion of this position, he should prove; first, that in the condition and treatment of the Negroes, there were causes sufficient to afford us reason to expect a *considerable decrease*, particularly *that their increase had not been a serious object of attention*; secondly, that this decrease was, in fact, notwithstanding, very trifling, or rather, he believed, he might declare it had now actually ceased; and thirdly, he should urge many direct and collateral facts and arguments, constituting on the whole, an irresistible proof that even a *rapid* increase might henceforth be expected.

It was much to be lamented, he said, that on both sides this great subject had been treated in a manner by no means calculated to answer the purposes of a cool and deliberate enquiry; there had been too much warmth and acrimony. For his own part, he hoped he had always both thought and spoke with candour and moderation. In judging and speaking of the condition and treatment of Slaves in the West Indies, he had never adopted those indiscriminate censures, into which some had incautiously fallen. It would be in the highest degree unjust to the Gentlemen of the West Indies, not to observe this distinction, and a due regard to it would have tended to soften asperity, and even perhaps to have prevented much of the opposition they have given. In stating, as he was about to do, the leading circumstances of the condition of the Negroes, it would, however, be necessary to remark, That, whatever splendid instances there might be of good treatment, there were some evils of almost universal operation, such he meant as were necessarily connected with a system of Slavery. Above all, the state of degradation to which the Slaves were reduced, deserved to be noticed in this regard, and from which the worst consequences resulted in a thousand ways, both to their own comfort, and even to their masters' interests. Of this there could not be a more striking proof than the utter inattention to them as moral agents. It was not merely that they were *worked under the whip like cattle*; but no attempts were ever made to instruct them in the principles of religion and morality. This, together with the acknowledged neglect of any attempt to introduce regular marriage among them, applied directly to the question concerning their

their increaſe, and tended to refute the notion of it's having been ſeriouſly attended to. The Gentlemen who aſſerted this, and who ſaid they could point out nothing defective in the treatment of Slaves, had frankly confeſſed that their morals were utterly neglected, and that the beſt conſequences might be expected to reſult from their being attended to;. and how could it but be ſo, when, as was declared by theſe very ſame Gentlemen, promiſcuous intercourſe, early proſtitution, and exceſſive indulgence in ſpirituous liquors, were material cauſes of their decreaſe? Indeed, the happy effects of inſtructing the Slaves in the principles of religion, had lately been experimentally proved, particularly in the Iſland of Antigua, where, under the teaching of the Moravians and Methodiſts, they had ſo far profited, that the Planters themſelves confeſſed their value, as property, was increaſed one-third by their increaſed habits of regularity and induſtry.

Whatever might have been ſaid to the contrary, it was plainly to be inferred, from the evidence, that the Slaves had not been under the protection of law. Colonial ſtatutes had, indeed, in ſome caſes, been paſſed, which might ſeem to afford them a ſort of qualified protection; but, however ill treated by their maſters, they had not been conſidered as having a right to any redreſs. A curious inſtance in point occurred to his recollection: it was contained in the evidence of Mr. Roſs, a Gentleman, for whom he muſt be allowed to expreſs ſentiments of unfeigned reſpect and regard. There was ſomething in the manner of his coming forward, to give his teſtimony, that reflected the higheſt honour on his character. Some of his neareſt and moſt intimate connections were in the Weſt Indian line; but when Mr. Wilberforce, without any previous acquaintance or introduction, called him forth to tell what he knew, he did not diſregard the appeal, but ſtept forward from a principle of duty which ſuperſeded all perſonal conſiderations. Mr. Roſs mentions an inſtance of aſtoniſhing cruelty, committed by a Jew. It was but juſtice to add, that the man was held in deteſtation whenever the circumſtance was told; but, though a matter of notoriety, it does not ſeem to have entered into the contemplation of any perſon, to call him to a *legal* account; and

Mr. Roſs expreſsly declared, That he conceived a maſter had a right to puniſh his Slave, in whatever manner he might think proper. The ſame was declared by numberleſs other witneſſes. There would be no end of going into particulars. An aſſertion, however, was to be found to the contrary, and ſome records of convictions had been ſent over as proofs of it. Mr. Wilberforce went into the particulars of theſe records, and refuted the concluſion they were meant to eſtabliſh; particularly remarking, that the convictions were all of a very late date, and that in one of them, where a maſter had cruelly and wantonly cut the mouth of a child, of ſix years old, almoſt from ear to ear, ſo ſtrange and ſo *novel* a doctrine did it appear to the jury, That a maſter was liable to puniſhment for any act of cruelty exerciſed on a Slave, that they brought in a conditional verdict, "*Guilty*, "*ſubject to the opinion of the court, if immoderate correction of a* "*Slave, by his maſter, be a crime indictable.*" The court determined in the affirmative; and what was the puniſhment of this abominable act of barbarity? A fine of 40 ſhillings currency, equivalent to about 25 ſhillings of our money!

The Slaves were but ill off in point of medical care; though that was an article wherein it might be expected there would be the leaſt defect, when they were the property of affluent Planters, becauſe it was that in which a prudent regard to intereſt, was the leaſt likely to be counteracted by any ſudden effects of paſſion. Sometimes 4 or 5, or even 8 or 9000 Slaves, were under the care of one medical man; which, diſperſed on different and diſtant eſtates, were a greater number than he could properly attend to.

There was reaſon to believe the Slaves in general were under-fed; he might refer to the poſitive declarations to that effect contained in the evidence, and would confirm them by two or three additional arguments. The Slaves, in general, were ſupported partly by the produce of their own proviſion-ground, partly by an allowance from their Maſter of flour or grain. In thoſe iſlands wherein the produce of the former were very trifling, owing to long and frequent droughts, their allowed food, inſtead of being proportionably greater, was actually leſs, than in other iſlands, where this produce was the moſt conſiderable.

derable. In one of the iſlands, where, we are told, proviſion-ground does not anſwer one year in three, it was from 5 to 9 *pints* per week: in Dominica, where theſe never failed, from 6 to 7 *quarts*; and yet, even in the latter, it was univerſally remarked, that the Slaves were in far better health and ſpirits, during the five or ſix months of the crop or harveſt ſeaſon, notwithſtanding the much harder labour of that period, owing to their being then ſomewhat better fed. It appeared, in the evidence of a reſpectable witneſs on the ſide of our opponents, that the utmoſt weekly allowance, generally given to a working Negro in Nevis and St. Chriſtopher's, where there was no proviſion-ground, was but 11 pints; yet, in the Act of Aſſembly, lately paſſed in Jamaica, it is preſcribed, That 21 pints ſhall be allowed weekly to every Slave confined in priſon. In Nevis alſo, ſo long ago as the year 1717, the rate of food was fixed at a pound of meat or fiſh, and a pound of bread, daily. A priſon allowance is not in general meant to be ſuch as will pamper the body; yet how much does it here exceed that of the working Field Slaves in the old Leeward Iſlands?

It was eaſy to ſee how, in the ſeveral particulars he had been mentioning, the Slaves would feel the bad effects of their Maſters' being embarraſſed in their circumſtances; whence would naturally reſult an abridgement of their food, with an increaſe of their labour: but this led him to the mention of a capital cauſe of the Negroes' ſufferings, and conſequent decreaſe. This was the non-reſidence of the Planters, many of them perſons of affluent fortunes, of ſound underſtandings, and liberal hearts; who, if they were on the ſpot, would attend to theſe poor creatures, and feel themſelves bound, both by duty and inclination, to promote their happineſs. But it was to no purpoſe to ſend out orders, of the execution of which they could know as little, as a king, who lived in his capital, could anſwer for what was carrying on in the moſt diſtant part of his dominions. Sir George Young and many others had ſaid, they ſaw the Slaves treated in a manner they were ſure their owners would have reſented if it had been known to them. Mr. Orde ſpoke in the ſtrongeſt terms on the miſconduct of Managers; the very changes of them, which were confeſſed by almoſt all Planters,

were an irrefragable proof of it. The fact was, that in general they ſought to eſtabliſh their characters, which, as Mr. Ottley ſuggeſts, is generally determined by this conſideration, *The producing large crops at a ſmall immediate expence*, too little conſidering how far the Slaves might ſuffer from ill-treatment and exceſſive labour. Mr. Long had noticed, and ſeverely condemned this practice; and *even the Managers themſelves had acknowledged it to be their leading principle.* But, if from theſe cauſes, the Slaves were ſuch grievous ſufferers, even when they belonged to opulent and worthy men, what muſt their ſtate be, ſubject to the ſevere exactions of *want* or *avarice*, and to the capricious cruelty of vulgar and unfeeling tyrants? The ſad and humiliating effects were but too abundant in the pages of the evidence, and he had rather refer to them there, than undergo the painful taſk of reciting them.

But, in addition to all he had already ſaid, concerning the cauſes which had prevented the keeping up the ſtock of Slaves by breeding, he muſt maintain, that it was inconteſtably proved that the object had never been ſeriouſly attended to. Here alſo he need only appeal to the teſtimony of the moſt reſpectable witneſſes, who not only formed the opinion as an infallible concluſion from what they ſaw with their own eyes, but who *learnt it from the expreſs declaration of the Managers and Overſeers themſelves.* But this was confirmed by the teſtimony of their opponents alſo. Mark the ſtate of this controverſy! The advocates for the Abolition alledged, that the increaſe of the produce was more attended to than the keeping up the ſtock: the reverſe of the propoſition was maintained by the Planters. Now it was natural to imagine, that men would be always beſt informed on thoſe ſubjects with which their minds had been moſt converſant. Yet you find alſo, moſt univerſally, that the Owners and Managers, when aſked about planting and the produce of their eſtates, are perfectly at home: when aſked about their proportion of males and females, the number of infants, and other ſuch particulars, they know little or nothing about the matter. Even medical men were perfect adepts in the art of planting; but when aſked the latter queſtions, connected with breeding

breeding and rearing, they ſeemed quite amazed, and could give no information.

In oppoſition, however, to his ſtatement of the condition and treatment of the Negroes, many very reſpectable witneſſes had been called, and, in particular, ſeveral perſons who had ſerved in the Iſlands in high profeſſional ſituations. He knew what was due to their worth and characters; and he truſted, they would do him the juſtice not to think him guilty of the ſmalleſt degree of perſonal diſreſpect, whilſt in the diſcharge of a duty, that was indiſpenſable to the taſk he had undertaken, he ſhould freely canvas their declarations. In the firſt place, he muſt enter a general proteſt againſt their teſtimony. He had formerly ſtated, that an Admiral's viſit to a Plantation muſt make a holiday, and could afford no adequate idea of the general ſituation of the ſlaves. This, indeed, might reaſonably be imagined; but the Committee was now told as much *by one of the party.* "I have often," ſays Mr. Roſs, "had the honour "of attending both Governors and Admirals upon tours in the "Iſland of Jamaica; in the courſe of which, the eſtates gene- "rally viſited were belonging to Gentlemen of diſtinction, "where we were entertained with every mark of reſpect, and "whoſe eſtates in general might be conſidered in high order "and good management; and it is not likely, even upon go- "ing into the fields or works where the Negroes were em- "ployed, but that attention would be paid by the white peo- "ple and drivers, not to harrow up the feeling of ſtrangers of "diſtinction by the exerciſe of the whip, or the inflicting of "puniſhments at that particular time; *and even if there were "any diſguſting objects, it is natural to ſuppoſe that they would "be removed upon ſuch occaſions.*" In fact, theſe Gentlemen afforded many proofs of their being under the influence of prejudice. Two or three he would mention: they, many of them, declared that the Abolition would be ruinous to the Weſt Indies. Now every perſon will acknowledge, that this muſt depend *upon the practicability of keeping up the ſtock, without African ſupplies:* yet, when aſked as to this circumſtance, their anſwer is, They know nothing about it! Hence it appeared, they had formed a concluſion without premiſes, a ſuperſtructure without a foun-

a foundation, which, of courſe, muſt fall to the ground. Another point worthy of remark was, that their evidence often extended through a long ſeries of years. No defect, no ill treatment, is remarked, in any portion of the time, nor is there any diſtinction of periods. The Slaves are uniformly ſo well cloathed, ſo well fed, ſo well treated, that nothing can exceed it: yet, almoſt in the ſame breath, you are told of their *amended* ſituation, and that they are now *far better off* than they were formerly. One of them, to whom his country is under high obligations, in proof that the Negroes enjoy the protection of laws, mentions a Maſter's having been ſentenced to death for the murder of his own Slave: but the recollection of the reſpectable perſonage muſt ſurely have failed him here; for the fact is, that the murder of a Slave was not then a capital crime. But it was leſs extraordinary, that the noble perſon alluded to, ſhould be miſtaken on a ſubject not within his own Province, when others were miſinformed on it, to whom it more immediately belonged. Of this there were repeated inſtances. A very reſpectable Governor being aſked, Whether a Maſter was liable to be puniſhed capitally for the murder of his own Slave, replied, "He never entertained a doubt of it himſelf, nor ever "heard a doubt of it expreſſed by any ſenſible or reaſonable "man;" yet, had he looked into the Statute-book of his own Iſland, he would have found, that the wilful murder of a Slave was puniſhable only by a fine of about 180 *l.* ſterling. This however was a heavier penalty than that inflicted by the Barbadoes law; for 15 *l.* ſterling was there the amount of it. In fact, their opponents' witneſſes, by attempting to prove too much, had proved nothing. The Slaves were ſaid to be in a better ſtate than the peaſantry of this country, whom, to uſe the emphatic language of Mr. Roſs, he would not "inſult with a compariſon;" and thoſe very circumſtances had been inſiſted on as proofs of the aſſertion, by which it was moſt palpably refuted.

It had been declared, alſo, that the Negroes were happier as Slaves, than if they were made free; and that, when made free, they never returned to Africa. There was ſcarce, perhaps, in the whole courſe of the buſineſs, a more ſtriking proof of prejudice, than was afforded by the firſt of theſe aſſertions. He allowed

lowed that a Slave, who was induſtrious, and in a ſituation wherein he might, to advantage, diſpoſe of any commodities he had been able to raiſe for ſale, could annually lay by a little money, which Mr. Wilberforce was glad to have it to ſay, he believed, was never taken from him. When the ſavings of many years at length had accumulated to a conſiderable amount, how did they then diſpoſe of it? With this ſum, for which they had been ſtruggling during the whole courſe of their lives, they went to their Maſters and bought their freedom; they purchaſed their releaſe from their ſituation of ſuperior happineſs, by the ſacrifice of their laſt ſhilling! And there was ſcarce any inſtance mentioned of a Slave's poſſeſſing property, but you found the circumſtance accompanied by that of his having thus employed it: or, when they thought the little that was left of their own lives not worth redeeming, they would purchaſe the freedom of a ſon, a brother, or a ſiſter; thus affording at once a proof of the value they ſet on freedom, and of diſintereſtedneſs and ſocial affection, that did honour to the human character. But the argument might be puſhed ſtill farther. It was not merely that the ſlaves themſelves deſired their freedom, ignorant perhaps of what might really contribute to their happineſs, but it was by the gift of it that their Maſters remunerated their long and faithful ſervices, as the beſt reward with which they could be recompenſed. Mr. Wilberforce would not ſo calumniate the Weſt Indians, as to ſuppoſe they meant only to mock theſe poor people with a real evil, for an imaginary good; nor yet that they were mocked by the laws which held forth to them this boon of freedom, as the moſt valuable recompenſe they could receive. The diſſatisfaction of the Slaves with their ſtate of bondage would appear ſtill more ſtriking, when it ſhould be conſidered, That they who bought their own freedom, in the manner he had above deſcribed, from the habits of induſtry, which were included in the very idea of acquiring ſo much property, were likely to have ſmarted leſs than ordinary under the whip of the driver; and that they muſt rather be ſuppoſed to be influenced by the evils of their preſent ſtate, than by the ſweets of that to which they aſpire; for their freedom, when obtained, was ſtill a ſtate of unprotected degradation, liable, as ſufficiently

ciently appeared by the evidence, to perpetual injury and inſult.

With regard alſo to their not returning to Africa, this was an argument that could hardly be urged with ſerioufneſs. Sinking into years, perhaps, before they had ſaved enough to purchaſe freedom, and thus procure to themſelves the opportunity, was it to be expected they ſhould venture acroſs the Atlantic? If they could even reach their homes in ſafety, all their kindred and connections would be now perhaps no more; and when, above all, they would reaſonably apprehend they might once more be kidnapped, once more hurried on board a ſhip, and again be forced to endure, and again ſurvive the horrors of the Middle Paſſage! But this love of their native country, and their deſire to return to it, was proved beyond a doubt: many of the witneſſes had heard them talk of it in terms of the ſtrongeſt affection. The acts of ſuicide were frequent, which, under their miſtaken notions, they committed as the readieſt means of getting home, and under the ſame notion that, by death, they were reſtored to their native land. Captain Wilſon aſſures us, that the funerals, which, in Africa, were accompanied with lamentations and cries of ſorrow, were attended, in the Weſt Indies, with every mark of exultation and joy.

Mr. Wilberforce added other obſervations, and truſted, on the whole, he had made good his firſt Propoſition, That the cauſes of decreaſe were ſo many and ſo great, that this decreaſe might reaſonably have been expected to be very conſiderable. In fact, however, in the Iſland of Jamaica, which, he conceived, he might take as a fair ſpecimen of the whole, it was very trifling; or rather, he believed, he might aſſert, had entirely ceaſed ſome years ago, and that *the decreaſe was only on the imported Slaves*. He would not trouble the Houſe at preſent with any thing more than the reſult of the calculations; but was ready to enter into the detail of them whenever he ſhould be deſired. In the Report of the Privy Council, they had the numbers imported, and the actually exiſting numbers during the laſt 90 years. From 1698 to 1730, a period of of 32 years, the decreaſe appeared to be three and a half *per cent*; in the ſecond period, from 1730 to 1755, the decreaſe

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was two and a half *per cent*; in the third period, from 1755 to 1768, it was leſſened to one and three quarters; and from 1768, to 1788, at the utmoſt, it was not more than one *per cent*, which alſo muſt be aſcribed in a great degree to an extraordinary ſeries of hurricanes, and conſequent famines, *leaving a loſs that would be fully accounted for by the numbers of imported Africans who periſhed in the ſeaſoning*, a cauſe of mortality which, it was evident, would ceaſe with the importation. From this, and other conſiderations, he felt himſelf warranted to aſſert, that the Slaves in Jamaica were now actually increaſing: nor need this ſurpriſe the Committee, for it was borne out by the poſitive teſtimony of Dr. Anderſon, a phyſician of conſiderable eminence, who ſolemnly gave in evidence, two years ago, to the Aſſembly of Jamaica, after enumerating the cauſes of the mortality of Slaves, that, notwithſtanding them all, he believed, that *there was a conſiderable increaſe on the properties of the Iſland, and particularly in the pariſh in which he reſided.*

Mr. Wilberforce ſaid, he would now proceed to fulfil his engagement, and bring forward ſuch facts and reaſonings as juſtified his perſuaſion, That the Slaves muſt henceforth be expected to increaſe, and that even rapidly. And, in the firſt place, he muſt draw a moſt important inference from the gradual leſſening of the decreaſe which he had already ſtated; for, as this had uniformly kept pace with the melioration of the Slaves' treatment, ſo there was every reaſon to hope, that as this ſhould be ſtill mended, the decreaſe would continue to leſſen in proportion. This expectation was put almoſt beyond a doubt by the following circumſtance, That wherever any *one* of thoſe cauſes, to which he had aſcribed the decreaſe of Slaves, had been either wholly, or in a great degree, removed, the decreaſe appeared to have been ſtopped, though all the other cauſes continued in full operation. Thus, in the caſe of ſeveral of their opponents' witneſſes, whenever the Gentleman examined had fed, or managed, or treated his Slaves better than ordinary, you were almoſt ſure to hear, in the ſequel, that he had kept up the number of his gang. Mr. Willock gave his Slaves an uncommonly large allowance of food, and their increaſe was accordingly. Mr. Ottley, Sir Ralph Payne, and many others,

afforded alſo pleaſing examples of a ſimilar nature, and the inſtances of eſtates that appeared in the evidence to have kept up their numbers were very many, almoſt always to be accounted for from ſome circumſtance of good treatment. In ſhort, it would weary the Committee to enumerate the inſtances of plantations that are ſtated in the evidence to have kept up their numbers. A remedy had been lately found for a diſorder by which vaſt numbers of infants had been formerly ſwept away. Mr. Long had laid it down, That whenever the Slaves ſhould bear a certain proportion to the produce they might be expected to keep up their numbers, and this proportion they now exceeded. The Aſſembly of Jamaica had given it as their opinion "That when once the ſexes ſhall become nearly equal in point "of number, there was no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the increaſe of "the Negroes, by generation, will fall ſhort of the natural in-"creaſe of the labouring poor of Great Britain." The Committee would be aware that the inequality, here ſpoken of, could only exiſt in the caſe of the *African* Negroes, of whom more males than females are imported. It was his decided opinion, for various reaſons, with which at preſent he would not trouble the Committee, That the diſproportion, even in this part of the Iſland ſtock, was by no means great, nor would he allow, for a moment, that it was ſuch as could counteract the natural courſe of population. In this he was certainly confirmed by Dr. Anderſon, who gave no hint to the Committee, that, in the pariſh wherein he reſided, one of the largeſt in Jamaica, the males and females were in any other than the ordinary proportion, nor even that any more than common attention was paid to the Slaves; yet there, he ſaid, of his own knowledge, they were increaſing. Nor ſhould it be objected, that ſeveral perſons of undoubted credit had ſtated, that they had in vain endeavoured to keep up their gangs without purchaſe; for, if this argument were to be deemed concluſive, it might be proved that the people of this, and of every other country, were rapidly decreaſing. Should an enquiry on that head be carrying forward, many individuals might come and declare, that their families had been ſwept away by conſumption, fever, or ſome contagious diſorder, in ſpite of the moſt watchful care, and the

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beſt medical aſſiſtance: all this might be very true, but it would afford no fair inference as to the general.

But to proceed to the facts which muſt confirm the hopes of the Committee beyond the poſſibility of doubting, without ſtopping to inſiſt on what was univerſally acknowledged, that the Negroes were a very prolific people in their own country, he muſt point the Committee's attention to the Continent of America: there it would be found, that the Slaves had increaſed at a rate that was truely aſtoniſhing, in one inſtance from 200 to 500 in the ſpace of about 30 years. From one end of the Continent to the other, this increaſe was undeniably eſtabliſhed; though the climate was far more unfavourable than that of the Weſt Indies to the conſtitutions of the Negroes, who not only had to contend with the ſeverity of cold in the winter, but in ſome parts with noxious exhalations in the ſummer, from which the white inhabitants fled to the towns as from a peſtilence. The only obſervable diſtinction was, that they were much better fed, and, in ſome places, more domeſticated; yet theſe circumſtances produced the difference he had mentioned, though ſo powerfully counteracted by an unfavourable climate.

He ſhould next direct their eye to another part of the world, where, as if to ſhow that there could be no ſituation in which theſe people would not keep up their numbers, they would be found to have done ſo at a place the moſt unhealthy, he believed, in the habitable world. He ſpoke of the ſettlement of Bencoolen, where it appeared, from the evidence of Mr. Botham, a number of Negroes, who had been imported in the ſame diſproportion of ſexes that is in the Weſt India cargoes, and under the ſame diſadvantages, as in the Iſlands, of promiſcuous intercourſe and general proſtitution, after they had been ſettled a ſhort time, began annually to increaſe.

But the Weſt Indies themſelves would furniſh a ſtill more remarkable inſtance: about the beginning of this century an African ſhip was wrecked upon the Iſland of St Vincent. The number of Negroes that eſcaped is not known. It was to be ſuppoſed the diſproportion of the ſexes was at leaſt as great as in the cargoes at this day. They had every difficulty to con-

tend with, were wholly unprovided with neceſſaries, and were obliged to maintain a conſtant war with the native Caribbs; yet they had ſoon multiplied to an aſtoniſhing number, and Mr. Ottley declares, he believes them ſtill to be on the increaſe, precluding, at the ſame time, a way of accounting for it, which had been ſomewhere ſuggeſted, by adding, as he has heard and believes, They never permit the run-away Slaves to incorporate with them, and that they have a peculiar mark produced by flattening the forehead in infancy, by which they are readily diſtinguiſhed from all other Negroes.

This is not all: it appeared, from Sir John Dalling's evidence, that the domeſtic Slaves in Jamaica increaſed, and, from the writings of Mr. Long, that there was an increaſe among the free Blacks and Mulattoes. But Mr. Wilberforce was, however, aware one inſtance of a contrary nature would be brought forward, contained in the evidence of Sir Archibald Campbell, whoſe name he could not mention, without expreſſing regret for his recent loſs, in common with many other Members of that Houſe. That Gentleman had informed the Committee, he had heard that the Maroons in Jamaica, had in 1739, amounted to 3000 men fit to carry arms, which Mr. Wilberforce need not inform the Committee, ſuppoſes the whole number about 12,000; but that, in the year 1782, after every poſſible exertion, to get all their fighting men to turn out to defend the Iſland againſt the French and Spaniards, he found, to his great aſtoniſhment, that the fighting men did not then amount to 300. Sir Archibald added, that he underſtood they were decreaſing daily: nor was this ſurpriſing, conſidering they had a free acceſs to ſpirits, of which they are remarkably fond, and that they often cohabited with the women of the neighbouring Plantations, and conſequently were not recruited, in theſe inſtances, by the addition of their own progeny. It is true, ſome of the witneſſes, in favour of the Abolition, had ſaid they believed theſe Maroons increaſed; but their opinion would hardly be received in contradiction to Sir Archibald Campbell's, and the reaſons by which it is ſupported.

But what, added Mr. Wilberforce, would the Committee ſay, when he ſhould prove deciſively, that theſe very people, from

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the actual enumerations of two different periods, had doubled their number in two and thirty years? About the year 1733, it was declared, in an act of the Jamaica Aſſembly, That, notwithſtanding every effort made againſt them, they ſtill increaſed upon their hands. A long and bloody war ſucceeded, and they were ſo greatly reduced that, whatever their numbers might have been in 1739, which Sir Archibald Campbell ſeems to ſtate only from popular rumour, they were, according to Mr. Long, actually numbered in 1749, when they amounted to about 660 in all, having 150 men fit to carry arms. Theſe, we find, from Sir Archibald Campbell's actual muſter in 1782, had increaſed to near 300 of the ſame deſcription, which gives 1200 in the whole; and the account is confirmed by an intermediate return of 1770, contained in the Privy Council's Report, when they were juſt ſo far in their way to the laſt mentioned number as you would expect to find them, being 216 men fit to carry arms, and in the whole 885. Nor ought it to be forgotten that, in 1749, the proportion of men to women was nearly four to three, a greater inequality than the opponents ſtated, and much more than he acknowledged to exiſt among the Slaves in Jamaica.

Mr. Wilberforce apologized for having dwelt ſo long on this branch of the argument; but it was that which was more important than all others, conſidering the queſtion in a political view; and, though he could never, for a moment, allow himſelf to remain under the imputation of forming his own deciſion on grounds of policy, yet he held it an eſſential duty, in his ſituation, to do his beſt to quiet the apprehenſions of the Planters, and to convince them that the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, indiſpenſible on every principle of religion and humanity, would not be injurious to their intereſts. After all he had ſaid, was there any one ſo confirmed in prejudice as to maintain that the Negroes would not keep up their numbers, if this were made, in any degree, a ſubject of attention? The reverſe was proved by ſound reaſoning. It was confirmed by unqueſtionable facts. In their native country, the Negroes were prolific to ſuch a degree, that by one of our opponents it has been ſaid, that they could continually throw off freſh ſwarms, without

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feeling the loſs of them. In America, through all her provinces, they had increaſed; they had increaſed alſo in Bencoolen; the Caribbs had increaſed in St. Vincent's, and the Maroons in Jamaica; the free Blacks and Mulattoes increaſe; the domeſtic Slaves increaſe; Dr. Anderſon atteſts, the Field-Slaves themſelves increaſe, and multitudes of particular inſtances of increaſe are ſtated in the evidence. The decreaſe is ſtated to be trifling, though no attention appears to have been paid to the ſubject. *That* decreaſe has been gradually leſſening, and whenever a *ſingle* cauſe of it has been removed, many ſtill remaining, it has altogether ceaſed. Surely, ſaid Mr. Wilberforce, this forms, on the whole, a body of proof which is utterly irreſiſtible.

Wr. Wilberforce now proceeded to treat of the conſequences of the Abolition in other views; on which he ſaid, he would be as brief as poſſible. And firſt, as to its effect on the Marine. He had uniformly aſſerted, that it was the grave, rather than the nurſery, of ſeamen; he knew, he could rely on the fidelity and accuracy of the Gentleman, by whom this ſubject had been inveſtigated; but if his ſtatements had wanted any authentication, they were confirmed beyond a doubt, by an Abſtract juſt laid before the Houſe, of the Liverpool and Briſtol Muſter-Rolls. From theſe it would appear, That, in 350 Slave-veſſels, having on board 12,263 perſons, 2643 were loſt in twelve months; whereas, in 462 Weſt India-men, having on board 7640 perſons, 118 only were loſt in ſeven months. This fully equalled, or rather exceeded, the loſſes ſtated by Mr. Clarkſon. There was no part of this whole ſubject on which the Committee had a more complete body of evidence than on this. Lord Rodney himſelf declared, "The Slave-Trade is "certainly not a nurſery for ſeamen." Governor Parry's Letter, from Barbadoes, would never, he hoped, be forgotten. The evidence of Mr. Roſs was clear on this point; and Mr. Edwards himſelf, whilſt with juſtice he complimented his countrymen on their humanity to the abject ſeamen who were left in Jamaica, ſhowed, at leaſt, that they were ſo left. Sir George Young and Captain Thompſon were very copious here, and deciſive as to the general ill treatment of the crews of Guinea-men, of which, however, the ſingle fact of their always wiſhing

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to quit their ſhips for a Man of war, whilſt the direct contrary happens in every other trade, was a more concluſive proof than the multitude of particular inſtances of ill-treatment he had it in his power to adduce. The inſtance of Captain Hall was very remarkable, who, being in the Impreſs Service in the Weſt Indies, at a time when ſeamen were extremely wanted, not for active ſervice only, but to ſend home the prizes that had been taken on the 12th of April, having brought off 30 hands, whom he ſelected with care from a crew of 70, was reprimanded by his Admiral for introducing ſuch wretches into the fleet, who were likely rather to weaken its ſtrength, by communicating infectious diſorders, than to render it any ſervice. Nor was it only to the conſtitutions of ſailors that this trade was injurious; it debaſed alſo and degraded their moral character. Captain Smith had declared, that "When employed to board Guinea-"men for the purpoſe of impreſſing men, although he had "boarded perhaps near 20 veſſels, he never was able to get "more than two men, and theſe turned out ſuch cruel inhu-"man fellows, that, although good ſeamen, he was under a ne-"ceſſity of diſmiſſing them the ſhip." But one of the moſt diſgraceful illuſtrations of this charge, was contained in the evidence of Mr. Roſs, who, having declared that his mind furniſhed him with a recollection of a great number of inſtances, wherein the Slave-Trade had been productive of great deſtruction and miſery to the human race, both blacks and whites, ſtated the fact to which Mr. Wilberforce had been referring, marked, as he obſerved, with peculiar circumſtances of horror! An African ſhip had ſtruck on ſome ſhoals, called the Morant Keys, a few leagues from the eaſt end of Jamaica. The officers and ſeamen landed in their boats, carrying with them arms and proviſion, *leaving the Slaves on board in their irons and ſhackles.* This happened in the night! When morning came, it was diſcovered the Negroes had got out of their irons, and, ſhame to the Europeans! not ſatisfied with ſaving themſelves only, were buſy making rafts, upon which they placed the women and children, the men, and others capable of ſwimming, attending on them, whilſt they drifted before the wind towards the Iſland where the ſeamen had landed. The minds of theſe, if, by the

habits of the Slave-Trade, they had not become hardened againſt every feeling of humanity, muſt have been moved by ſo intereſting a ſcene: they would have been eager to repair their former cruel neglect, and to lend them, though late, their beſt aſſiſtance. But what was indeed the ſequel? "From an "apprehenſion that the Negroes would conſume the water and "proviſion which they had landed, they came to a reſolution to "deſtroy the Negroes, by means of their fire arms and other "weapons, and as the poor wretches approached the ſhore, "they actually deſtroyed between 3 and 400! Out of the whole "cargo, only 33 or 34 were ſaved, and brought to Kingſton, "where they were ſold at public vendue." It is the *charitable conjecture* of Mr. Roſs, that they were in a ſtate of intoxication, when they adopted the above-mentioned reſolution, without having firſt made an attempt to diſpatch their boat to Jamaica for aſſiſtance, or a veſſel to take them and the Slaves off the Iſland; adding his perſuaſion, that, if they had acted with common diſcretion, there was no neceſſity for deſtroying one of them. But this, there was but too much reaſon to fear, was a ſuppoſition more of charity than juſtice; for there appeared no want of coolneſs and diſcretion, in the precautions they took for their own ſafety. It would, however, be to no purpoſe, Mr. Wilberforce added, to relieve the Slave-Trade from this act of barbarity; the ſtory of the Morant Keys was but parallelled by that of Captain Collingwood, and were you to get rid of theſe, another, and another, would ſtill preſent itſelf.

The volume of evidence, which lay before him, was filled with accounts of different kinds of miſeries. His feelings were too powerfully worked on to allow him to ſtop; and he muſt ſhut up the book at once, or he muſt read the whole. Whilſt he had been juſt reading to them the ſtory of the Morant Keys, his eye had but glanced on the oppoſite page, and it met another circumſtance of horror attending this trade, which had eſcaped him in its proper place. It related to what were called the "Refuſe Slaves;" what was ſignified by this term, he could not better explain to the Committee than by reading to them ſome words from Mr. Roſs. After ſaying there were, in the Town of Kingſton, a number of people who ſpeculated in the

purchaſe

purchaſe of the Slaves, left after the firſt day's ſale, for the purpoſe of carrying them to the country and retailing them. He proceeded to declare, that he "had *frequently* ſeen the very Refuſe "of the Slaves of Guinea ſhips, landed and carried to the "Vendue-maſter in a very wretched ſtate, ſometimes in the "agonies of death, and there ſold at very ſmall prices, *even as* "*low as a dollar, and that he had known inſtances of their ex-*"*piring in the Piazzas of the Vendue-maſter.*" The bare deſcription ſuperſeded the neceſſity of any remark: *yet theſe are the familiar incidents of the Slave-Trade!*

But there were other fatalities to which ſeamen, in this trade, were peculiarly liable. In the courſe of his enquiries, it had occurred to him, to look into the liſt that was kept at Lloyd's, of the caſualties that befel our ſhipping, and thence he ſoon collected the account, contained in the book he held in his hand, where, in ſome years, it appeared one, in others two, and in others three, and in one as many as ſix, ſhips were cut off by the natives, or deſtroyed in ſome other manner. Such articles as theſe were every where to be met with: in ſhort, the hiſtory of this commerce was written throughout, in characters of blood.

Mr. Wilberforce ſaid, he ſhould next conſider the effects of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade on thoſe places by which it was moſt carried on. He alluded to Briſtol and Liverpool, particularly the latter, of whoſe commerce it had been uſually thought to conſtitute a conſiderable ſhare. Long might ſhe be rich and flouriſhing, provided it was by fair and honeſt gains; and he was happy in being able to ſay, that it was not by this deteſtable traffic, that ſhe had riſen to her preſent opulence; and that, not only becauſe it compoſed but a thirtieth part of her export trade, but alſo becauſe, from private information, as well as public documents, he was authoriſed to ſay, it was merely a lottery—profitable, indeed, to ſome individuals, but a looſing trade on the whole. The Delegates from Liverpool had declared, at the Bar of the Houſe, that, in order to give the Merchants a profit, he muſt be allowed to carry a greater number of Slaves, in proportion to his tonnage, than he was permitted by the exiſting law; and, in the accounts, contained in the papers

on the table, of the tonnage of ſhips, and the number of Slaves they carried, the cargoes of a great part of them would be found to be below that proportion.

Of the commerce of Briſtol, the Slave-Trade conſtituted a ſtill ſmaller proportion. For the effects of the Abolition, on the general commerce and on the manufactures of Great Britain, he would refer the Committee, once more, to the evidence of Mr. Irving, where they would find that the benefits of its continuance, in theſe views, had been extremely exaggerated. The medium value of Britiſh manufactures, exported to Africa, amounted but to between four and five hundred thouſand pounds a year, and there was no doubt, but that the ſuperior capital, ingenuity, induſtry, and integrity, of the Britiſh manufacturer, would command new markets for the produce of his induſtry, when *this* ſhould be no more: but he ſhould advert hereafter to this ſubject. He might have been warranted to call our exports to Africa, a trifle, conſidering that the value of Britiſh manufactures, of late exported from this country, exceeds that of the moſt flouriſhing period before the laſt war, in the ſum of 2,500,000*l.* One branch, indeed, of our manufactures, he muſt confeſs, was likely to ſuffer from the Abolition, and that was the manufacture of *Gun-powder, of which the nature of our connection with Africa, drew from us as much as we exported to all the reſt of the world beſides.*

He haſtened, however, to another part of the argument, on which it would be neceſſary for him to take up more of the time of the Houſe. By many perſons it had been ſaid to him, "We wiſh, as earneſtly as you can do, to put an end to the Slave-Trade, but we cannot approve of your mode. Allow it to be carried on for ſome time longer; for, by a haſty Abolition, you will diſpleaſe the Legiſlatures of the Weſt India Iſlands, on whom you muſt, in fact, depend for ſuch a melioration of the Slaves' condition, as, by enſuring the keeping up of the numbers, will prevent the neceſſity of importation. It is, by them, the laws muſt be paſſed for the protection of Slaves, and it is, by the Magiſtrates and others in the Iſlands, that theſe laws muſt be enforced." Now, ſaid Mr. Wilberforce, I am directly at iſſue with theſe Gentlemen; and though the effects of the Slave-

Slave-Trade on Africa, were not ſuch as to preclude every idea of regulation, I ſhould be decidedly of opinion, that the Abolition was to be recommended as the beſt, and indeed the only certain, mode of ſo far amending the treatment of Slaves in the Weſt Indies, as to ſecure their increaſe; adding, that he truſted he ſhould prove that the mode preferred by theſe Gentlemen was at once inefficacious and unſafe. In order to prove the inefficacy of any laws that might be paſſed for ſecuring good treatment to the Slaves, it would be ſufficient to acquaint the Houſe, if they were not already aware of it, that *The evidence of Negroes is, in no caſe, admitted againſt white men.* The conſequences of this would be obvious, when it ſhould be conſidered, that there were ſeldom more than one or two white men on a Plantation; and, in the language of the Grenada Anſwer, that "Thoſe who were capable of the guilt in queſtion, will, in "general, be artful enough to prevent any but Slaves being "witneſſes of the fact." Hence it had ariſen, that when poſitive laws had been made, in ſome of the Iſlands, for the protection of the Slaves, they had been found almoſt a dead letter, as was abundantly proved in the evidence before them. But, granting it were poſſible, by poſitive laws, to protect the Slaves, from the extremes of ill uſage, from murder and mutilation, by what laws could they hope to *enter into every man's domeſtic concerns, and regulate the interior œconomy of his Houſe and Plantation?* This would be ſomething more than a general exciſe, and what never could, or would, be borne by freemen. Yet on all theſe, and innumerable other minuteneſſes, muſt depend the comfort of the Slaves' ſituation, and the probability of their increaſe. A new ſyſtem, indeed, had been attempted to be introduced, by which individuals, under the name of Guardians, were, by turns, to attend to carrying the laws into execution; but all this machinery would be to no purpoſe; and ſo long as it continued in action, it would make every man a ſpy upon his neighbour's conduct: it would poiſon the comforts of domeſtic life, and deſtroy the confidence of ſocial intercourſe. Would any one, therefore, conceive it poſſible, that it ſhould prove efficient, or, if ſo, that it could long continue in operation? But it would be concealing too much to admit, that,

even in greater matters, *the laws* would be effectual. It was univerſally allowed, that the regulations of the *Code Noir*, however excellent, had been utterly neglected in the French Weſt India Iſlands, though there was an officer appointed by the Crown, for the expreſs purpoſe of ſeeing them enforced. The proviſions of the *Directorio* had been but of little more avail in the Portugueze Settlements, nor the inſtitution of *a Protector of the Indians* in thoſe of the Spaniards. This leſſon of the futility of Slave-Laws, was ſo experimentally inculcated on the ſpot, that many, in the Iſlands, aſcribed the Bills that had been lately paſſed, to a diſpoſition to blind the people of this country, rather than to any ſerious expectation of being able to carry them into execution. Mr. Wilberforce, for his own part, ſincerely diſclaimed any ſuch opinion: on the contrary, he gave ample credit to many of thoſe who had an active ſhare in bringing them forward; and, in particular, he had read, with pleaſure, the language on that ſubject, of a Gentleman to whom he had before had occaſion to allude. But after all their regulations, what degree of protection the Slaves would enjoy, might be inferred from the admiſſion of the Gentleman by whom this very plan had been recommended; no ordinary man, but a perſon of diſcernment and legal reſources. He had propoſed a limitation of the number of laſhes, to be given by the maſter or overſeer, for one offence; but when aſked, "Can "you ſuggeſt any mode by which the maſter can be brought "to puniſhment, even if he ſhould give the Slave ever ſo great "a number of laſhes, in a ſhort ſpace of time, ſcreening him"ſelf under the artifice of ſplitting one crime into many, "and giving the limited number of laſhes for each?" he frankly replied, "I can deviſe none, while the evidence of "Slaves continues inadmiſſible againſt their Maſters." After this, who would maintain, that the treatment of Slaves by their Maſters could be made ſubject to the regulations of the law? The artifice ſuggeſted before, was not an ideal one: they who had read the evidence, would recollect a diſguſting inſtance of it recorded by Captain Cooke; wherein an inhuman wretch, in Barbadoes, had chained a Negro Girl, of about nineteen, to the floor, and flogged her till ſhe was nearly expiring,

with

with agony and loſs of blood. After he had retreated to avoid the effects of the reſentment ſo ſhocking a ſight naturally kindled in perſons unuſed to ſuch ſcenes, he cried out with exultation, "I have only given her 39 laſhes [*the number preſcribed by law*] "at any one time, and *that* I have only given her three times, "ſince the beginning of the night;" adding, "that he would "flog her to death for all any one, and would have given her "the fourth 39 before morning?"

But, he muſt repeat it, This plan of amending the ſituation of the Slaves, and ſecuring their good treatment by laws, was not inefficacious only, but *unſafe*. He entered his proteſt againſt the fatal conſequences that might reſult from it, and called on thoſe who were moſt immediately intereſted in the queſtion, to lend their ſerious attention to his argument. The Negroes, he ſaid, were creatures like ourſelves: they had the ſame feelings, and even ſtronger affections than our own; but their minds were uninformed, and their moral characters were altogether debaſed. Men, in this ſtate, were almoſt incapacitated for the reception of civil rights. In order to become fit for the enjoyment of theſe, they muſt, in ſome meaſure, be reſtored to that level from which they had been ſo unjuſtly and cruelly degraded. To give them a power of appealing to the laws, would be to awaken in them a ſenſe of the dignity of their nature. The firſt return of life after a ſwoon, was commonly a convulſion, dangerous, at once, to the party himſelf, and to all around him. Such, in the caſe of the Slaves, Mr. Wilberforce feared might be the conſequence of a ſudden communication of the conſciouſneſs of civil rights. This was a feeling it would be dangerous to impart, till you ſhould releaſe them from ſuch humiliating and ignominious diſtinctions, as, with that conſciouſneſs, they would never endure. You muſt conduct them to the ſituation in queſtion, having firſt prepared them for it, and not bring the ſituation to them. To be under the protection of law, was, in fact, to be a freeman; and, to unite ſlavery and freedom, in one condition, was a vain attempt: they were, in truth, incompatible, and could never be brought to coaleſce. With this ſyſtem, which he thus condemned, he wiſhed to contraſt the Abolition, which was exactly ſuch an agent, if he might

might ſo expreſs himſelf, as the nature of the caſe required. All hopes of ſupplies from the Coaſt being cut off, Breeding would henceforth become, what it had never been before, a ſerious and general object of attention, the effects of which would not be confined merely to thoſe greater articles of better feeding and milder diſcipline, but would extend to innumerable other particulars, which an Act of Aſſembly could neither ſpecify nor enforce. Whatever might be ſaid to the contrary, or, whatever might have prevailed in the caſe of liberal or opulent men, it was plain *Too many had gone upon the ſyſtem of working out their Slaves in a few years, and recruiting their gangs with imported Africans.* The Abolition would give the death blow to this ſyſtem. The oppoſite one, with all its charities, would force itſelf on the moſt contracted and unfeeling heart. Ruin would ſtare a man in the face, if he did not conform to it. The ſenſe of intereſt, ſo much talked of, would not, as heretofore, be a remote, a feeble, or even a dubious impulſe; but a call ſo preſſing, loud and clear, that it's voice would be irreſiſtible. But it's grand excellence was, that it would ſtand between the abſentee Maſter and his Slaves, and ſecure to them the effects of his benevolent intentions. Managers would henceforth be forced to make Breeding the prime object of their attention; and every non-reſident Owner would expreſs himſelf in the terms of Sir Philip Gibbs, "That he ſhould conſider "it as the fault of the Manager, if he did not keep up the "numbers." This reaſoning, concerning the dangerous tendency of the one ſyſtem, and the happy conſequences of the other, appeared to Mr. Wilberforce almoſt ſelf-evident. Facts were not wanting, however, to confirm the truth of it. It had been remarked by the Hiſtorian of Jamaica, that inſurrections almoſt always owed their riſe to the *African* Slaves, who, not having loſt the conſciouſneſs of civil rights, which they had enjoyed in their own country, could not brook the indignities to which they were ſubjected in the Weſt Indies. The effects broke out in general rebellions, or appeared in particular acts of ſuicide, of which laſt, though frequent among the African Negroes, he did not recollect to have ever heard of a ſingle inſtance among the Creoles. The ſafety of his ſyſtem had been

been tried already, in this relation; for it was univerſally agreed, That the treatment of the Slaves had been gradually growing better, and inſurrections had been leſs frequent in the ſame proportion. An inſtance, in point, was afforded by what had lately taken place, in the Iſland of Dominica. It was notorious, indeed, that the diſturbance had chiefly ariſen from ſome runaway Slaves from the French Iſlands; a circumſtance which, it appeared from the Report of the Privy Council, had produced the ſame conſequences ſeveral years before: but ſo far as any cauſe connected with treatment was concerned, what was that cauſe, and what was the object on which the diſſatisfaction of the Slaves was ſaid to have faſtened? What, but that they were not allowed the full time of receſs from labour to which they had a legal right? And the quieting effects of mild treatment appeared in this, that the Slaves of ſome perſons who had been treated with kindneſs, were not among the number of the inſurgents. He could not help adding, that he thought his doctrine, That the Slaves muſt owe their comforts to the Maſters' indulgence, rather than to the protection of law, had been, in a conſiderable degree, ſanctioned and verified, even in the Iſland of Jamaica; for all the laws for the protection of Slaves, which had been formed into one conſolidated act, having expired in 1784, and the Aſſembly, owing, as was alledged, to "preſſing buſineſs," not having revived it till 1787, *during that whole period of three years the Slaves were altogether deſtitute of the protection of all theſe, ſo much boaſted, ſtatutes; and yet we do not hear that they were, in any degree, better or worſe off than when theſe continued in force.*

But when Gentlemen coolly talked of putting an end to the Slave Trade, through the medium of the Weſt India Legiſlatures, and of gradual Abolition, by the means of regulations, they ſurely forgot the Continent of Africa, and the miſeries which this horrid traffic occaſioned there, during every moment of its being allowed to continue. This conſideration was concluſive on his conduct, when called on to decide, Whether the Slave Trade ſhould be tolerated for a while, or immediately put an end to. The Divine Law againſt Murder was abſolute and unqualified, and precluded, with him, every conſideration of expediency.

expediency. Whilſt, ſaid he, we were ignorant of all theſe things, our ſuffering them to continue, might, in ſome meaſure, be pardoned; but now, when our eyes are opened, can we tolerate them for a moment, much leſs ſanction them, unleſs we are ready at once to determine, that gain ſhall be our god, and, like the heathens of old, are prepared to offer up human victims at the ſhrine of our idolatry?

This conſideration precluded alſo the giving heed, for an inſtant, to another plea which had been often urged and inſiſted on, That, if Great Britain were to aboliſh this Trade, it would be proportionably taken up by other nations; for he muſt add, that he could by no means conceive that this was likely to be the caſe. If, in this country, where the means of information were ſo generally diffuſed, the evils of this deteſted commerce were never before laid open to the view, what wonder if, in other countries, where theſe means are extremely deficient, theſe evils alſo were unknown? And was it fair to infer, from edicts and proclamations encouraging the Trade, that were paſſed in this ſtate of ignorance, that they would not, at once, revoke them, when their eyes ſhould be fully opened to it's enormities? He would not ſo vilify and calumniate the character of other nations, as, even for a moment, to give place to the contrary ſuppoſition.

But it became Great Britain, in every view, to take a forward part. *One half* of this guilty commerce had been carried on by her ſubjects.---As we had been great in our crime, let us be early in our repentance. If the bounty of Providence had ſhowered it's bleſſings on us in unparallelled abundance, let us ſhow ourſelves grateful, as we ought, for the bleſſings we enjoyed, by rendering them ſubſervient to thoſe purpoſes for which they were intended. *There would be a day of retribution, wherein we ſhould have to give an account of all thoſe talents, and faculties, and opportunities, with which we had been intruſted.* Let it not then appear, that our ſuperior power had been employed to oppreſs our fellow-creatures, and our ſuperior light to darken the Creation of God.---He could not but look forward, with delight, to the happy proſpects that opened themſelves to his view in Africa, from the Abolition of the Slave Trade, when a Com-

a Commerce, juſtly deſerving the name of Commerce, ſhould be eſtabliſhed with her, not like that, falſely ſo called, which now ſubſiſted, and which all who are intereſted for the honour of the commercial character, though there were no ſuperior principle, ſhould haſten to diſavow. Had this trade, indeed, been ever ſo profitable, his deciſion would have been in no degree affected by that conſideration. " *Here's the ſmell of blood on the hand ſtill, and all the perfumes of Arabia cannot ſweeten it.*"

He doubted whether it was not almoſt an act of unbecoming condeſcenſion to ſtoop to diſcuſs the queſtion in the view of commercial intereſt. On this ground, however, he was no leſs ſtrong than on every other. Africa abounded in many productions of value, which ſhe would gladly exchange for our manufactures, when theſe were not otherwiſe to be obtained: and, to what an extent her demand might then grow, exceeded almoſt the powers of computation to appretiate. One inſtance already exiſted of a native king, who being, by his religion, debarred the uſe of ſpirituous liquors, and therefore not feeling the irreſiſtible temptation to acts of rapine, which they afforded to his countrymen, had aboliſhed the Slave-Trade, throughout all his dominions, and was encouraging the arts of honeſt and bloodleſs induſtry.

For his own part, he proceeded to declare, That intereſted as he might be ſuppoſed to be in the final event of the queſtion, he was comparatively indifferent as to the preſent deciſion of the Houſe. Whatever *they* might do, *The people of Great Britain, he was confident, would aboliſh the Slave-Trade, when, as would now ſoon happen, it's injuſtice and cruelty ſhould be fairly laid before them.* It was a neſt of ſerpents, which would never have endured ſo long, but for the darkneſs in which they lay hid. The light of day would now be let in on them, and they would vaniſh from the ſight. For himſelf, he declared, that he was engaged in a work he never would abandon. The conſciouſneſs of the juſtice of his cauſe would carry him forward, though he were alone; but he could not but derive encouragement from conſidering with whom he was aſſociated. He added, Let us not deſpair; it is a bleſſed cauſe, and ſucceſs, ere long,

will crown our exertions. Already we have gained one victory: we have obtained, for theſe poor creatures, *The recognition of their human nature*, which, for a while, was moſt ſhamefully denied. This is the firſt fruits of our efforts; let us perſevere, and our triumph will be complete. Never, never will we deſiſt till we have wiped away this ſcandal from the Chriſtian name, releaſed ourſelves from the load of guilt, under which we at preſent labour, and have extinguiſhed every trace of this bloody traffic, of which our poſterity, looking back to the hiſtory of theſe enlightened times, will ſcarce believe that it has been ſuffered to exiſt ſo long, a diſgrace and a diſhonour to this Country.

Mr. Wilberforce then moved, "That the Chairman be inſtructed to move for leave to bring in a Bill to prevent the farther importation of Slaves into the Britiſh Colonies in the Weſt Indies."

Colonel TARLETON declared, that "gratitude towards thoſe conſtituents, who had ſent him ſo honourably to that Houſe, as well as a thorough conviction of the juſtice of their cauſe, impelled him to vindicate their character and property, although, perhaps, from inexperience, or inability, he might not be able to accompliſh what he ſo ardently deſired. The ingenuity, the amplification, and the pathetic eloquence, of the Hon. Gentleman, having worked no conviction on his mind, he ſhould proceed to arrange the arguments he had to offer, againſt the Abolition of the Slave-Trade. So many branches of the commerce of this country were connected and interwoven with the queſtion, that it would be neceſſary to make many ſtatements, form ſeveral calculations, and read various extracts, to elucidate the ſubject. Throughout the whole of what he had to ſay, he ſhould aim more at perſpicuity than embelliſhment, and labour rather to convince the underſtanding than bewilder the imagination.

Before he entered upon any part of the ſubject, he thought it neceſſary, for the ſake of clearneſs, and to prove to Gentlemen, that he did not mean to evade or blink any ſtrong part of the queſtion, to enumerate the different heads upon which he

was about to ſpeak. He ſaid, he ſhould ſtate the beginning of the Trade, the ſanction given to it by Government, the manner of conducting the Trade on the Coaſt of Africa, the tranſit to the Weſt Indies, the employment and treatment of the Negroes in the Weſt Indies, the amount of the property engaged in the trade, the value of the Weſt India Iſlands to this country, the eagerneſs other nations have diſcovered to enlarge their Slave-Trade, and the importance of the Trade as a nurſery for ſeamen. He then went into an hiſtorical account, from the reign of Queen Elizabeth down to the preſent time, quoting his authority, and dwelling ſome time on this part of the ſubject.

Colonel Tarleton next came to the ſanction of Parliament, which had always countenanced the Trade, and could not, without a breach of faith, be withdrawn; and here he recollected what had fallen from a Right Hon: Gentleman on a former occaſion, and which he thought applicable to thoſe concerned in the African Trade; it was, that upon no occaſion, ſhort of abſolute neceſſity, ought private property to be ſeized by public acts, without granting a compenſation. The Colonel contended, that the Africans themſelves had no objections to the Trade; and many people who where prejudiced againſt it, had been led away by miſtaken humanity, and often by miſrepreſentation. With regard to the number of deaths, which happened on the paſſage, he had acceſs to examine, and could diſtinctly ſtate, to the Committee, that they never had exceeded in the Liverpool ſhips, on an average, five out of an hundred, whereas, in regiments ſent out to the Weſt Indies or America, the average was about ten and a half in the hundred.

Many attempts had been made to cultivate the lands in the different Iſlands, by white labourers; but it was found, that from the difference of climate, and other cauſes, population had decreaſed, and that thoſe who took the greateſt pains to accompliſh this, found that, in ten years time, they could not have any proportion of Whites capable of purpoſes of cultivation at all. He therefore agreed in the neceſſity of the Slave-Trade, if we meant to carry on the Weſt India Commerce and Cultivation; and he quoted the opinions of Gov. Parry, Adm. Hotham, Com. Gardiner, Sir Arch. Campbell, and a long liſt

of reſpectable names, in ſupport of the poſition which he had laid down. Next, he gave the opinion of that gallant officer, Lord Rodney, reſpecting the great advantage that accrued to the Navy, upon the breaking out of a war, by having ſo numerous a body of mariners, inured to the climate, when we wiſh to ſend a fleet to the Weſt Indies; a circumſtance worthy of attention. And from Liverpool alone, he ſaid, the Navy might be ſupplied with 993 ſeamen annually, from the beſt calculation that could be made; an object that certainly ought not to eſcape the notice of a wiſe Government.

Col. Tarleton then proceeded nearly as follows:—Having received the indulgence of the Houſe during various ſtatements, which, perhaps, had nothing of novelty in them, but which were indiſpenſably neceſſary, and which he had endeavoured to render as conciſe as poſſible, he would not much longer treſpaſs on it's patience. It could not, however, he truſted, be deemed ſuperfluous if he mentioned ſome circumſtances to the Houſe which he might have omitted, or which he had not ſufficiently enforced to attract it's attention. He could wiſh Gentlemen to advert to the property and connections dependent on the African Trade; as much dependant on the African Trade, to uſe the language of a nervous and elegant writer, as a "bird is "on it's wing, for food, and when wounded there, it ſtarves!" He could wiſh to impreſs Gentlemen ſtrongly with the recollection of the ſanction the African Trade had obtained from Parliament. He could wiſh to remind them of the length of time the queſtion of Abolition had been pending in that Houſe. He could wiſh to give as much aſſiſtance as lay in his power, which he acknowledged to be extremely feeble, to accelerate that adjudication which had been ſo often, and ſo earneſtly, entreated by the numerous merchants and manufacturers of this Country, whoſe intereſt had been materially injured by procraſtination; and he truſted he could not make a futile appeal to that Houſe, when he called upon it's juſtice to extend an immediate vote of protection to the Weſt India Planters, whoſe lives had been, and were, expoſed to imminent and hourly danger, and whoſe property had undergone a ſevere and unmerited depreciation, notwithſtanding the exiſting laws of this country,

for

for the inquiſitorial powers veſted by the Conſtitution in that Houſe. To what could Gentlemen aſcribe that depreciation? To what could they impute the late inſurrection at Dominica? —which Iſland the Governor lately pledged himſelf to hold in ſubjection, without the aſſiſtance of the military, but which was lately ſaved, from horrid carnage and midnight butchery, by the adventitious preſence of two Britiſh regiments? To what, he repeated, could Gentlemen impute this inſurrection, but to the queſtion of Abolition? And, after a tedious inveſtigation on that queſtion for near four years, he could not diſcover the ſlighteſt reaſon to juſtify delay, except Gentlemen could not prevail upon themſelves to decide, before an inſurrection had abſolutely taken place at Jamaica, when the ſorrow, he had almoſt ſaid the penitence, of the Mover and abettors of the Abolition, and the interference of that Houſe, would be equally unavailing.

To gentlemen of great landed property, it was unneceſſary for him to point out the tendency and probable effect of the propoſed Abolition.—If he poſſeſſed all the eloquence and ingenuity in that Houſe, with thoſe powerful auxiliaries, he ſhould not be able to convince them, that the Abolition would leſſen the national debt, increaſe the commerce of the country, or take one fraction from the oppreſſive taxes they now endured: but, he believed they would give him credit, inexperienced as he was in that Houſe, when he plainly advanced, that it would have a directly contrary effect; when he aſſerted, that the authors and abettors of the Abolition endanger their honour, their property, and their happineſs; and when he inferred, that the Miniſter, not being taken by ſurpriſe, muſt be ſuppoſed to have ſome capital reſource in ſtore, either from ſome novel calculation that the land-tax would bear an additional burthen, or from ſome inexhauſtible ſource of unclaimed property, which had hitherto eſcaped the vigilance of his predeceſſors in office, and would compenſate to the public for ſuch a diminution of the Trade, and conſequent defalcation of the Revenue of the country.

To the mercantile part of the Houſe, he muſt likewiſe uſe language, which, he was ſorry to ſay, ſeemed conſonant to the feelings of the authors and abettors of the Abolition. "Gentlemen, your ſucceſs in trade, has of late years been ſo prodigious, that it ſeems neceſſary to ſuſpend your activity, by cutting off one of the principal branches of your trade, for the ſake of humanity and the honour of the nation. You are to have no farther reſpect for, or future confidence in, Acts of Parliament. The ſanction of the Legiſlature is nothing. A few of the Miniſterial ſide of this Houſe have been gifted with religious inſpiration, and, and the revelation has been extended to certain eminent Perſonages on this ſide of the Houſe; and theſe enlightened Philanthropiſts have diſcovered, that it ſeems neceſſary, for the ſake of humanity, and the honour of the nation, that all Britiſh merchants concerned in the African Trade ſhould have their deſigns harraſſed, their property injured, and their reputation traduced; notwithſtanding ſuch perſecution muſt, undoubtedly, foſter, encourage and aggrandize the ſurrounding nations of Europe, who rival Great Britain in her commerce, and in her navigation." As the ſuperſtition and bigotry, in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, which, during thoſe dark, ignorant, and barbarous ages, threw down every barrier erected by reaſon and by juſtice—in the name of God, let not a miſtaken humanity, in theſe enlightened times, furniſh a colourable pretext for any injurious attack on property or reputation.

But if all the authorities which he had adduced, were doubtful—if his premiſes were fallacious—if ſome of the circumſtances of cruelty were proved, which the Abolitioniſts have only aſſerted, and which, fortunately for this country, and happily for human nature, were unfounded, he ſhould think himſelf guilty of a raſh and impolitic meaſure in voting for the Abolition, if he took only a curſory glance at the finances of England, and her relative ſituation with Europe. He could not bring himſelf to think this a convenient time, the country in an eligible ſituation, or the Miniſter ſerious in his inclination to make an experiment which preſents a certain proſpect of loſs, and no probability of advantage. An Abolition would inſtantly annihilate a trade, which annually employs upwards of 5,500 ſailors, upwards

wards of 160 ſhips, and whoſe exports amount to 800,000 *l.* ſterling. And the ſame experiment would, undoubtedly, bring the Weſt India trade to decáy, whoſe exports and imports amount to upwards of 6,000,000 *l.* ſterling, and which gives employment to upwards of 160,000 tons of additional ſhipping, and ſailors in proportion—all objects of too great magnitude to be hazarded on an unneceſſary ſpeculation, which, in all human probability, would prove ruinous to the commercial conſequence, to the national honour, and the political glory of Great Britain.

Mr. GROSVENOR, having come into the Houſe while Col. Tarleton was ſpeaking, roſe immediately after him. He prefaced his ſpeech with many compliments to the humanity and good intentions of the Honourable Mover. He ſaid, he had read only the Report of the Privy Council; for he wanted no other evidence, and it appeared to him, from the delay of two years, that the Honourable Gentleman himſelf muſt have great doubts of the propriety of his Motion; for, if it was ſo clear a point as it was declared to be, it could not have needed either ſo much evidence or ſo much time. Mr. Groſvenor ſaid, he had heard a great deal of kidnapping Slaves, and of other barbarous practices. He was ſorry for it; but it ſhould be recollected, that theſe things were the conſequence of the natural law of Africa, and that, inſtead of declaiming againſt it, we ſhould endeavour, like wiſe men, to turn it to our advanvantage. Gentlemen had diſplayed a great deal of eloquence in exhibiting, in horrid colours, the traffic in Slaves. He acknowledged it was an *unamiable* Trade, ſo alſo were many others: the trade of a butcher was an unamiable trade, but it was a very neceſſary one, notwithſtanding. He could not help thinking there was great reaſon to doubt the propriety of the Motion; and, the more he conſidered the ſubject, the more was he perſuaded that it was an improvident and unwiſe meaſure. Mr. Groſvenor ſaid, he would endeavour to explain the nature of his objections to the Motion, by introducing a ſtory. When the Duke of Marlborough was abroad, the Commander

of

of a garriſon, which he viſited, made an apology for not ſaluting His Grace, according to the cuſtom, aſſuring him he had one hundred reaſons to aſſign for not doing it, the firſt of which was, that he had no cannon: upon which the Duke immediately anſwered, that he would excuſe him the other ninety and nine. In the ſame manner, ſaid Mr. Groſvenor, "I have twenty reaſons for diſapproving of the Aolition of the Slave-Trade, the firſt of which is, That the thing is impoſſible; and, therefore, I need not give the other nineteen." Parliament could not aboliſh the Trade: they might relinquiſh it; but to whom? To France, Spain, and Holland, and other countries, who would take it up and ſhare it among them; ſo that the Trade would be ſtill continued, and without the humane regulations which were applied to it by the Engliſh.

After ſome other obſervations, Mr. Groſvenor quoted a ſaying of the late Alderman Beckford, on the origin of the American War, when he cautioned the Houſe againſt it: "Meddle not with troubled waters (ſaid the Alderman) they will be found to be bitter waters, and the waters of affliction." He again ſaid, that he admitted it was an unamiable Trade; but he would not gratify his humanity at the expence of the intereſts of his country, and he thought we ſhould not too curiouſly enquire into the unpleaſant circumſtances with which perhaps it was attended. He ſhould, therefore, certainly oppoſe the Abolition.

Mr. JAMES MARTIN ſaid, that whoever had lived to any advanced age, muſt be well aware to what a conſiderable degree a miſtaken ſelf-intereſt could darken the underſtanding, and pervert the judgment, even of the beſt meaning perſons. He had often, with much concern, obſerved, how very perniciouſly this bias operated to the detriment of ſociety, and to the diſgrace of mankind; but he was not appriſed of the full power of this deluſion of the mind, till the buſineſs now before the Committee began to be the ſubject of public diſcuſſion. He had always conceived, that the cuſtom of trafficking in human creatures, had been incautiouſly begun, without its dreadful and neceſſary

conſequence

conſequences being foreſeen;—for he never could perſuade himſelf that any man, under the influence of moral principles, could ſuffer himſelf, knowingly, to be carrying on a trade replete with fraud, cruelty, and deſtruction.—He ſaid, deſtruction, for ſo be thought, and thought the deſtruction introduced and occaſioned by this moſt ſhocking Trade, was of the blackeſt and moſt inhuman ſpecies; inaſmuch as it was a lingering death which, inſtead of putting an end to the miſery of the ſufferers by a ſpeedy ſtroke, not only afflicted and tortured the body, but, by depriving the wretch of all the deareſt comforts of life, harraſſed the mind, till nature, ſinking under grief and deſpair, kindly granted that relief which the tyrant Maſter, for the ſake of his own private, but much miſtaken, ſelf-intereſt, would deny. But, he obſerved, it was clear to every perſon of accurate obſervation, that thoſe who blindly and immediately liſtened to the ſuggeſtions of a narrow ſelf-intereſt, did really thwart and counteract that intereſt to which they were ready to ſacrifice every juſt, noble and public principle.

He ſaid, it was well obſerved, in the excellent Petition from the Univerſity of Cambridge to that Houſe, againſt the Slave-Trade, that, "A firm belief in the Providence of a benevolent "Creator, aſſures them that no ſyſtem founded on the oppreſſion "of one part of mankind, can be beneficial to another." He felt much real concern and mortification, that in an Aſſembly of the Repreſentatives of a country, boaſting itſelf zealous, not only for it's own liberties, but for the general rights of mankind, it ſhould be neceſſary to ſay a ſingle word on ſuch a ſubject; but, from the ſentiments he had heard in various converſations, very much to his ſurpriſe, it appeared, that, however ſtrongly the ſenſe of truth and juſtice was impreſſed on the minds of unprejudiced perſons, the deceitfulneſs of the human heart was ſuch as to change the appearances of truth when it ſtood in oppoſition to ſelf-intereſt, as ſelf-intereſt is often unfortunately miſunderſtood.—He verily believed, that there was hardly any thing ſo execrably unjuſt and cruel, that men, who are thoroughly ſelfiſh and avaricious, would not bring themſelves to believe to be right and defenſible, and would not conſequently adduce ſpecious and ſophiſtical arguments to ſupport; but truſted, that

every honeſt man would treat ſuch arguments with the contempt and indignation which they deſerved, and that Britain, as a wiſe and virtuous nation ſhould, would hold faſt and cling to the eternal and univerſal principles of truth, juſtice, and humanity.

He lamented that he had heard doctrines maintained, which ſeemed to have been reſerved for times, the moſt flagrantly profligate and abandoned; but he truſted that ſuch doctrines would not be received, or even be offered, in that Aſſembly. He never expected to hear that the everlaſting laws of righteouſneſs, were to give way to imaginary, political and commercial expediency, and that multitudes of our fellow creatures, ſeveral ſcores of thouſands annually, were to be reduced to the moſt wretched of all ſtates, that Individuals might enjoy a greater degree of opulence, or that the State might collect ſomewhat more for it's revenue. Theſe conſiderations, compared with the ſacred and eternal rules of juſtice and mercy, were ſo trifling, that he truſted they would have no weight whatever, when oppoſed to them; and he could not but be very ſanguine in his hopes of ſucceſs to the meaſure propoſed by the worthy Mover, when he conſidered, that from the goodneſs of his cauſe, he muſt neceſſarily have the countenance and ſupport of the moſt reſpectable Bodies of men, as well as of private Individuals, of almoſt every deſcription, as he ſhould now endeavour to ſhow.

However, Mr. Martin ſaid, we might have differed in party opinions, concerning certain high and diſtinguiſhed characters, he believed all would allow the firſt perſons of Royal dignity in this country, to be of merciful and benevolent diſpoſitions, and that they had inſpired thoſe deſcended from them, with the ſame ſentiments of humanity and generoſity. This being ſo, we might juſtly entertain the warmeſt hopes of the countenance and ſupport of every part of the Royal Family. Both Houſes of Parliament were now engaged in the proſecution of a Gentleman accuſed of cruelty and oppreſſion in a high degree. He feared that ſome of the charges, brought againſt that Gentleman, might be too well founded; but ſo far as appeared to him, in regard to the exerciſe of any cruelties brought home to him, they were neither to be compared in number or degree, to thoſe which were every day, and every hour, committed, in the

abominable traffic, the Abolition of which was now under diſcuſſion.—Of the Reverend Bench of Biſhops, who were, by their doctrine and example, to render Chriſtianity amiable, and to recommend it to the world, he muſt not be permitted to doubt, on this occaſion; and ſome of the inferior Clergy had already manifeſted an honeſt zeal in this moſt righteous cauſe. —The Univerſity of Cambridge had preſented a petition to that Houſe, worthy the attention of every well-wiſher to humanity; and the ſiſter Univerſity had, by the mouth of one of her reſpectable Repreſentatives, given ſanction to the meaſure. Diſſenters, of various denominations (particularly the Quakers, who, upon this occaſion, to their immortal honour, had taken a leading part) vied with ſome of the moſt reſpectable of the eſtabliſhed Church, in ſtanding forth in this excellent cauſe. ——We had, for many years, and, God knows, with too much reaſon, been hearing violent accuſations of delinquents from India.---Surely, the accuſers of ſuch delinquents would be eager, upon this occaſion, to ſhow that they had been actuated by the pure principles of humanity, without party ſpirit or other unworthy motives. Particularly, he ſhould much confide in thoſe Gentlemen, who, as Managers of the proſecution againſt Mr. Haſtings, had exhibited ſuch aſtoniſhing eloquence, as, perhaps, was never excelled, or even equalled. The ſame powers of eloquence, exerted in a cauſe at leaſt as worthy, muſt bear down all obſtacles or reſiſtance, and defeat every oppoſition that narrow and miſtaken ſelf-intereſt could raiſe againſt the meaſure. Some of the greateſt trading Towns in this country, had declared for the Abolition, in which they had been joined by many of the firſt Counties in weight and conſequence, particularly by that County of which the Honourable Mover is one of the Repreſentatives. The County of York had always been, and, he truſted, ever would be, forward to take the lead in every public meaſure, in which the general rights of mankind were intereſted. He was perſuaded, that the wiſhes of that diſtinguiſhed County upon this, as upon every occaſion, would be powerfully ſupported by it's two excellent Repreſentatives.

With ſo much good ſupport, and ſo good a cauſe, it muſt be impoſſible to fail.---Let but every man ſtand forth, who had, at any time in his life, boaſted, as an Engliſhman, of a ſuperior regard to the general rights of nature and of mankind, and who had affected, at leaſt, to deſpiſe other nations as being defective in ſuch regard---and we ſhould moſt aſſuredly ſucceed; but if it were otherwiſe, we muſt have a moſt ſhameleſs effrontery, if we ſhould ever after pretend to the character of real Chriſtians, or Britons, or indeed of men of ſuch general moral principles as ſhould govern every human being, of whatever country or religion.---Indeed, as Britons, and eſpecially as the Repreſentatives of a people priding themſelves in, and perpetually boaſting of, liberal ſentiments towards all mankind, we ſhould be particularly cautious, and even extremely anxious, to avoid the ſmalleſt appearance of any unjuſt and tyrannical principle. But how diſtinguiſhingly hypocritical ſhould we appear, if, inſtead of defending the rights of the oppreſſed, we ſhould be the leaders in oppreſſion and cruelty, or at leaſt wait for the example of thoſe whom we accuſe of being tyrannical, before we checked and ſtopped the arm of tyranny, which had been too long violently wielded over our fellow-creatures?

We who were tenacious to exceſs, if it were poſſible, of our rights, and manifeſted the hotteſt indignation even at the ſmalleſt perſonal inſult, (particularly if it was offered by the hand of Government)---we, who had puniſhed tyrants of the higheſt rank in this country---were we to ſuffer innocent creatures to be whipped, and ſcourged, and tortured without diſcretion, without controul, without trial, and without law? In ſhort, if we had any regard to national reputation, let us not add the moſt ſhameful and abominable hypocriſy to guilt and infamy, by exerciſing tyranny of the blackeſt kind, and affecting, at the ſame time, the keeneſt indignation at every exertion of power amongſt ourſelves, that was not ſtrictly and perfectly legal. He was ſo far from condemning the jealouſy of illegal power amongſt ourſelves, that it had his higheſt applauſe---but he could wiſh, that the ſame laudable principle ſhould be exerted in it's fulleſt extent, towards the reſt of mankind. *While we could hardly bear the ſight of any thing* RESEMBLING *ſlavery, even as a puniſh-*

a puniſhment, among ourſelves, ſhould we countenance the exerciſe of the moſt deſpotic power over millions of creatures, who, for aught we knew, were not only innocent but meritorious?

It had been frequently, but moſt diſgracefully, ſaid, by the advocates for the continuance, or at leaſt by thoſe who were not very zealous for the Abolition, of this commerce, That *We* ſhould not be too eager in ſetting the example; but that we ſhould wait for the French, or other foreigners, to take the lead in this buſineſs. How far ſuch a ſentiment was conſiſtent with the ancient, noble, and generous character of this nation, and with the high opinion we were apt to entertain of our national honour at this time, he would leave to the judgment of every impartial perſon. But he would flatter himſelf, that we ſhould rather have been eager to be firſt in ſo good a cauſe, and that we ſhould rather have been fearful of being anticipated by thoſe whoſe principles, in regard to the rights of mankind, we had not been accuſtomed to hold in very high reſpect. If any nation was to be foremoſt in ſuch a matter, which was moſt bound to take the lead, ſuch as pretended, and proudly too, to a vaſt ſuperiority over the reſt of mankind in their civil rights, or ſuch as they had always affected to deſpiſe for abject ſubmiſſion, and the meaneſt ſervility? If We ſhould ſet this good example, and not be followed by other European nations, let the guilt and infamy of ſuch a ſyſtem lie heavy on thoſe, who, in that caſe, would continue to act upon it, in ſpite of example, added to the dictates both of reaſon and religion.

Surely, Mr. Martin ſaid, this motion came recommended to us in the ſtrongeſt manner. The Honourable and worthy Gentleman who introduced it, was juſtly eſteemed for the reſpectability of his character. He was one of the Repreſentatives of a county, which, as he had ſaid before (but which, for it's honour, could not be mentioned too often) had always manifeſted a readineſs to take the lead in every public meaſure, for the good of the community, or for the general benefit of mankind. If this buſineſs had been in hands leſs able and leſs reſpectable, he ſhould *now* particularly have much regretted the loſs of one of the Honourable Gentleman's predeceſſors in the repreſenta-

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tion of Yorkſhire, who, he was ſure, upon this occaſion, would have eagerly diſplayed that ardent zeal for the unalienable rights of *all* his fellow-creatures, which was one of the chief characteriſtics of that moſt excellent citizen; but, he was perſuaded, that, as the preſent Repreſentatives of the County of York had been worthy followers of that bright example, ſo, on this moſt intereſting occaſion, they would burn with the ſame ardent zeal for relieving the diſtreſſed, which animated the breaſt of that moſt incomparable man. Would to God, that every Member of the Britiſh Parliament would look up with reverence to that illuſtrious pattern! Let them follow his footſteps in the purity of their conduct, in their love of juſtice, mercy, and truth, and in the univerſal rectitude of all their meaſures. If they did this, they would pay the ſame tender regard to the Rights of other countries as to their own; and, for his part, he ſhould never believe thoſe perſons really ſincere, who were loud in their profeſſions of love to liberty, if he ſaw that love confined to the narrow circle of one community, which ought to be extended to the natural Rights of every human inhabitant of the globe.

We ſhould be more able, Mr. Martin ſaid, to bring ourſelves up to this ſtandard of rectitude, if we heartily endeavoured to imagine ourſelves in the ſituation of thoſe who are oppreſſed, and then ſeriouſly conſidered what we ſhould think of ſuch as would wiſh to eſtabliſh a juſt and equitable ſyſtem of morality in regard to themſelves, and one of another kind towards thoſe, whom, for certain reaſons, they might erroneouſly think it their intereſt to oppreſs.—But, he added, let us not deceive ourſelves ſo groſsly, as to imagine, that it is our real intereſt to oppreſs any one. The advantages to be obtained by oppreſſion and tyranny were imaginary and deceitful to the oppreſſor and the tyrant; and the evils they cauſed to the oppreſſed, were heavy, grievous, and many times inſupportable.

Before he ſat down, he would beg leave to obſerve, that if, in delivering thoſe ſentiments which he had preſumed to offer to the Houſe, he ſhould appear to have expreſſed himſelf in any way too ſtrongly, or with too much vehemence, he freely truſted to the candour and fairneſs of Gentlemen for giving him the credit of not wiſhing or meaning to ſay any thing violent

or offenſive. But he muſt declare, that he ſhould think moſt contemptibly of himſelf, could he mention the enormities of the Slave-Trade, without a very conſiderable degree of emotion and reſentment; nevertheleſs, he would wiſh it were perfectly underſtood, that this reſentment went only to the principles and conſequences of the Trade itſelf, without any ill will towards the perſons concerned in it. Many of thoſe perſons, from peculiar ſituations, and from circumſtances, perhaps almoſt unavoidable, might be involved in it, and probably much to their concern and diſcontent. Such perſons, he doubted not, from uſe and habit, ſaw it in a very different light, however, from others. If a perſon, being betrayed by his feelings into an unbecoming degree of heat, in ſuch matters as relate ſolely to his own ſelfiſh intereſts, was pardoned for ſuch offence, he ſurely had a juſter claim to liberal allowance, whoſe feelings were excited by the wrongs of others, with whom he had only that general connection, which, however, ought ſtrongly to be felt by every human creature.

Mr. Martin ſaid, *he* could ſuffer no grievance whatever from the continuance of the Slave-Trade; and he therefore truſted, that there would be a diſpoſition to excuſe any exceſs that could have been occaſioned only by that pity which he felt for others. He was aware but of one unworthy motive to which his conduct, as well as that of many other individuals, upon this occaſion, might be attributed—He meant the oſtentation and parade of virtuous and worthy ſentiments. Now, he ſaid, he muſt beg leave to remark, that it appeared to him that there is no one good action which could be performed in life that might not be attributed, by ſuſpicion or malevolence, to that particular motive. Men might always inſinuate, that vain glory was the cauſe by which individuals were incited to actions apparently good, but that matter muſt be decided between God and the conſciences of thoſe perſons whoſe conduct was ſuſpected, or perhaps maliciouſly accuſed, even without ſuſpicion; and if the general tenor of a man's life did not fairly lead to ſuſpicion that he was hypocritical or oſtentatious, it was ſurely highly uncharitable to impute to him ſuch diſpoſition without ſufficient grounds; and it was moreover of moſt pernicious conſequence to the public,

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as a great diſcouragement to men from acting meritoriouſly, when they not only loſt the credit of ſo acting, but were accuſed of doing that which was right in itſelf, merely for the ſake of public and popular applauſe. If, notwithſtanding this remark, he ſhould be ſo unhappy as to draw upon himſelf, by the part he had taken in this buſineſs, that harſh and undeſerved cenſure which he wiſhed to deprecate, he muſt endeavour to ſatisfy himſelf with the conſciouſneſs of his own fair intentions, and his moſt ſincere unwillingneſs to give offence to any one, and with declaring, that as he did not pretend to judge of the feelings of other men's minds, ſo he muſt proteſt, that ſeeing this matter in the light he did, he ſhould eſteem himſelf one of the worſt of men, did he not exert every means in his power perfectly to aboliſh ſuch abominable wickedneſs. If, in attempting to forward this Abolition, he ſhowed the weakneſs of his ability, he muſt conſole himſelf with the conſideration, that he felt more ſolid comfort from ſound public principles and conſiſtent conduct therein, than he imagined he ſhould do from the exertion of any the moſt brilliant faculties with which he might have been bleſſed.

He had only to conclude with giving his hearty aſſent in the moſt public manner, to the preſent motion, and with imploring the bleſſing of Heaven on every honeſt and earneſt endeavour for the attainment of it's perfect and complete ſucceſs. Mr. Martin added his tribute of ſincere thanks to the Hon. Gentleman who had made the motion of that day, and to thoſe Honourable Gentlemen who had particularly aſſiſted him in the proſecution of this buſineſs. He was very certain that, they deſerved the Thanks of that Houſe and the Public, and that when this matter ſhould be thoroughly underſtood, they would receive thoſe Thanks in the fulleſt and ſincereſt manner.

Mr. BURDON ſaid, he was a good deal embarraſſed how to act. The Honourable Gentleman who moved the queſtion, had, in a great meaſure, met his ideas. He conſidered himſelf as very much in his hands; but he wiſhed to go gradually, and not ſo much at once, to the queſtion of Abolition. He wiſhed

wiſhed to give time to the Planters, for taking ſuch meaſures as would keep up their ſtock; and he feared the immediate Abolition might cauſe a monopoly among the rich Planters, to the prejudice of the leſs affluent. We ought, like a judicious phyſician, to follow Nature, and promote a recovery that ſhould be gradual. He wiſhed, therefore, for ſome motion ſhort of Abolition.

Mr. FRANCIS, after a compliment to Mr. Wilberforce, ſtated, that perſonal conſiderations might appear to incline him to go againſt the ſide which he was about to take, namely, that of ſtrenuouſly ſupporting the motion. Having, himſelf, an intereſt in the Weſt Indies, he thought that what he ſhould ſubmit to the Houſe, would have the double effect of both evidence and argument: and he ſtated, moſt unequivocally, his opinion, That the Abolition of the Slave-Trade would tend materially to the benefit of the Weſt Indies.

The arguments urged by the Honourable Gentleman were ſupported by the facts, which he had proved in evidence, more ſtrongly than any arguments had ever been ſupported in any ſpeech he had heard in that Houſe. He wiſhed, however, that more of theſe facts had been introduced into the debate; for they were apt to have a greater effect on the mind than mere reaſonings, however juſt and powerful. Many perſons had affirmed, that the Slave-Trade was politic and expedient; *but it was worthy of remark, that no man had ventured to deny that it was* CRIMINAL. Criminal, however, he declared it was, in the higheſt degree; but how far politic or expedient he greatly doubted. Nay, he did not even doubt it; for both it's inexpediency and injuſtice had been clearly eſtabliſhed in the admirable ſtatement of the Honourable Gentleman. He dwelt much on the *unhappy ſituation of the Negroes in the Weſt Indies, who were without the protection of Government or of efficient Laws, ſubject to the mere caprice of men who were, at once, the Parties, the Judges, and the Executioners.*

He inſtanced an overſeer, who, having thrown a Negro into a copper of boiling cane-juice, for a trifling offence, was puniſhed

merely by the loſs of his place, and by being obliged to pay the value of the Slave. He ſtated another inſtance of a girl, of fourteen, who was dreadfully whipt for coming too late to her work in the morning—fell down motionleſs after it, and was then dragged along the ground, by the legs, to an hoſpital, where ſhe died. The murderer, though tried, was acquitted by a jury of his peers, from the idea, that it was impoſſible a Maſter ſhould deſtroy his own property. That this was a notorious fact, mentioned in the Jamaica Gazette, which had even happened, *ſince* the queſtion of Abolition had been ſtarted.

The only argument uſed againſt ſuch cruelties, was, The Maſter's intereſt in the Slave: but he urged the common cruelty to horſes, in which their drivers equally have an intereſt, as a proof that this is no ſecurity. He had never heard an inſtance of a Weſt-India Maſter that was puniſhed for putting his Negro to death. The propagation of them was checked, becauſe it was thought more profitable, and leſs troubleſome, to buy a full grown Negro, than to rear a child. Mr. Francis repeated, that his intereſt might have inclined him to the other ſide of the queſtion; but he did not chuſe to compromiſe between his Intereſt and his Duty; for, if he abandoned his Duty, he ſhould not have been happy in this world, nor deſerved nor hoped to be happy in the next.

Mr. PITT then roſe, but not, as he ſaid, to enter into the queſtion at ſo late an hour (it being about eleven o'clock). He ſhould wiſh to deliver his own ſentiments very fully, which, he feared, it was impoſſible to do that night; nor could there be time for a full diſcuſſion of the ſubject, on the part of other Gentlemen, unleſs an adjournment was to take place. With the conſent of the Houſe, he ſhould therefore move, That the Chairman ſhould now leave the Chair, with a view of reſuming the ſubject on the very next day, meaning to put off the Orders of that day, until the day after.

Mr.

Mr. CAWTHORN ſaid, that he wiſhed, himſelf, not to ſeparate before the queſtion was decided; but, provided there was no longer delay intended, than till the day following, he would not preſs his objection.

Col. TARLETON, however, roſe to ſay, that, as he was anxious to have the queſtion ſettled without any delay whatever, as the Houſe was then extremely full, and as there were many Gentlemen who, to his knowledge, were going next day out of town, he certainly ſhould reſiſt the motion of Adjournment.

The Gallery was then cleared, when the following converſation took place,

Col. PHIPPS ſaid, that though he agreed with the Honourable Gentleman, in oppoſing the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, yet he could not agree in oppoſing the queſtion of Adjournment; for he wiſhed to have an opportunity of declaring what were thoſe reaſons which would decide his conduct, and he appealed to the candour of thoſe who thought with him, whether there ought not to be an opportunity afforded for farther diſcuſſion.

Mr. Fox roſe and ſaid, that although the oppoſition to an Adjournment was undoubtedly uncandid and unbecoming the Houſe, yet he thought the Honourable Gentleman who preſſed for an immediate diviſion, underſtood better the intereſt of his own ſide of the queſtion, than the other Honourable Gentleman: for Mr. Fox had ever conceived that the only way, by which the Abolition of the Slave-Trade could be prevented, muſt be by ſtifling all enquiry, and by hurrying the Houſe into ſome vote, that might ſeem to decide the queſtion, before opportunity of any real debate upon the principles of the Slave-Trade was afforded. It was a Trade which, the Gentlemen themſelves well knew, *could not bear to be diſcuſſed.* Let there be diſcuſſion, and, although there were ſome ſymptoms of pre-

determination in ſome Gentlemen, the Abolition of it muſt be carried. He would not believe that there could be found in the Houſe of Commons, men of *hard hearts* enough, and of ſuch *inacceſſible underſtandings*, as to vote an aſſent to the continuance of the Trade; and then go home to their houſes, their friends, and their families, ſatisfied with their vote, after being made fully aware of what they were doing, by having opened their ears to the diſcuſſion.

Col. PHIPPS explained, and aſſerted again, that he wiſhed for a fair diſcuſſion.

Mr. PITT agreed with Mr. Fox, that, from a thorough diſcuſſion of the ſubject, there was every reaſon to augur that the Abolition would be reſolved on. He obſerved, that, under the imputations with which this Trade was loaded, Gentlemen ſhould remember they could not do juſtice to their own Characters, unleſs they ſtood up in the Houſe, and gave their reaſons for oppoſing the Abolition of it: that it was unuſual alſo to force any queſtion, of ſuch importance, to ſo haſty a deciſion. That, for his own part, it was a duty incumbent on him, from the ſituation in which he ſtood, to ſtate very fully his own ſentiments on the whole queſtion; and that, however exhauſted both himſelf and the Houſe might be, he was reſolved it ſhould not paſs without diſcuſſion, as long as he had ſtrength to utter a word upon it. *That every principle that could bind a man of honour and of conſcience, would impel him to give the moſt powerful ſupport he could, to the motion for the Abolition.* But that he had waited to hear what could be the arguments of Gentlemen, on the other ſide of the queſtion, whom he conceived to be bound, ſtill more ſtrongly than himſelf, to vote for the Adjournment.

Col. TARLETON ſaid he ſhould decline preſſing his oppoſition to the Adjournment.

Lord CARHAMPTON confeſſed it would he indecent to preſs for the immediate deciſion, and agreed therefore to the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

At half paſt Eleven, the Houſe Adjourned.

TUESDAY,

TUESDAY, APRIL 19.

SIR WILLIAM YOUNG roſe and ſaid, that having the day before liſtened, with due attention, and he might ſay, with admiration, to the Speech of his Honourable Friend, he felt the preſumption of any attempt to counteract the firſt impreſſion on the minds and paſſions of the Houſe, and he therefore had reſerved his oppoſition to a more cool and temperate period of the Debate.

He knew that the part which, with others, he was to take, would bear time and reflection, that he had the vantage-ground of fact and of argument, which he had much need to poſſeſs, while ſo much ability, as well as influence of ſituation and character, were ranged on the ſide of his adverſaries. Truth and reaſon, he ſaid, muſt indeed be with him, and ſtrongly too, to warrant a ſingle hope of ſucceſs in the event of that night's Debate!——Yet that hope he ventured to entertain, relying on the facts and inferences which he ſhould ſtate.

It was indiſputable, that the intereſts of private property and of commerce, might be affected by the meaſure propoſed. A new trade, indeed, in Africa, was held out as an indemnification; and conſiderations alſo of ſtill greater force, namely, the paramount claims of juſtice and of humanity, had alſo been brought in aid of the argument. Such claims no one would oppoſe, when clear and acknowledged; but the premiſes on which the Committee were urged to proceed, ought firſt to be examined, and a diſcrimination made of circumſtances, of objects and effects. The probable attainments, on the ſide of Philanthropy and moral obligation, ought to be ſifted out, ſince the ſacrifice

crifice propoſed was, in the opinion of many, nothing leſs than a conſiderable portion of Britiſh Commerce, and an ultimate ſurrender of the Britiſh Colonies.

Before he gave his vote for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, he ſhould wiſh to be convinced, that whilſt *Britain loſes*, *Africa would gain*. No one was more averſe to a traffic of men, termed a Slave-Trade, and he happily anticipated it's termination, at no very diſtant period of years, under a wiſe and temperate ſyſtem of regulation. He ſpoke of the preſent meaſure, as crude and indolent, as precluding better and wiſer meaſures already in train, and as tending to withhold the neceſſary encouragement to our Colonies, in what they are now doing, preparatory to the object, of finally ſuppreſſing the Trade, which we had in view; and he obſerved, that it ought to be the characteriſtic of a Britiſh Parliament, to attain not only the *beſt ends*, *but by the wiſeſt means*.

Great Britain might abandon her ſhare of this Trade, but could not aboliſh it. The general queſtion of the Abolition of the Trade for Slaves to Africa, was not before the Committee. They were not an Aſſembly of Delegates from France, from Spain, from Holland, and other Powers, now engaged in that Commerce, but the Legiſlature of a ſingle Nation, whoſe dereliction of it could not, in anywiſe ſuppreſs, but would eventually aggravate, thoſe *miſeries incident to it*, *which every enlightened man muſt acknowledge*, *and every good man muſt deplore*. He wiſhed to ſee the traffic for ever cloſed, as much as his Honourable Friend, but that "conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed," would be farther removed, by a too haſty and unqualified receſſion on the part of Great Britain.

We might, by regulation, give example of new ſentiments, new policy, and principles of juſtice, and of nature, both to Africa, and to the Nations trading with her; but if we ſuddenly withdrew from this Commerce of Slaves, like Pontius Pilate, we waſhed our hands indeed, but we ſhould not be innocent as to the conſequences.

He then ſtated, that the Nations of Europe, as well as the United States of America, were crowding to this Trade for Slaves, and only waited it's ſuppreſſion, on the part of Great

Britain

Britain, to ruſh on the Coaſts of Africa, in competition for the ſhare of traffic, thus newly opened to them. The new projects would go far beyond the old mark of temperate acquiſition, and in the zeal of rivalſhip, the preſent evils of *comparatively* ſober dealing, would be aggravated to an enormity beyond all eſtimate, in this new Auction, this new heat of *Bidders for Life and Limb.*

On the firſt agitation of this buſineſs, his Honourable Friend ſpoke with confidence, of other Nations abandoning this traffic, after our example. The prophecy was ſcarcely delivered, when a ſimilar procedure was inſtituted in the National Aſſembly of France, under every advantage: yet what was the reſult? The Slave-Trade was referred to a Select Committee, and, the report of that Committee to reject the meaſure of Abolition, M. Barnave moved ſundry reſolutions to ſuch effect, which were received with acclamation, and voted with unanimous aſſent. He was aſtoniſhed to hear again, the ſame promiſes and expectations held out. He then quoted the evidences of Mr. Dalzell, Mr. Penny, Mr. Falconbridge, and others, to ſhow that the French were actually foremoſt in continuing and extending the Slave-Trade, giving bounties of 40 Livres a ton on the ſhipping employed in it, and 60 Livres on each Slave, imported into Martinique and Guadaloupe, 100 Livres on each, being the bounty to ſeveral other Iſlands; that Spain alſo was ſeeking a Slave-Trade, giving a bounty of four dollars each, and opening certain Ports for two years, to all foreign veſſels, freighted, excluſively, with African Slaves; that Denmark alſo was deſirous of a portion of this Commerce, as appeared from the evidence; that America did not neglect this Trade, but was advancing in it: and that the Dutch, as appeared by reſolutions of the States of Holland and Weſt Friezeland, recognized it's neceſſity, and formally recommended effectual means for it's recovery.

The conſequences of this new competition, he was perſuaded, would be more pernicious to the Africans, than the ſhare of Trade now held by Great Britain. *Things were bad enough indeed, as they now were*, but they would bear aggravation. He did not admit the diſorders imputed to the Trade, in all their

extent. The Slave-Coaſt was ſaid, in evidence, to be populous. He did not allow, therefore, that *pillaging* or *kidnapping*, could be general, though *too frequent inſtances of it were in proof*. Crimes were ſaid to be *falſely imputed*, for the purpoſe of procuring Slaves; this alſo, *he admitted*, but only to a certain extent. Witchcraft, he believed, was the ſecret of poiſoning (a crime, ſurely, of the deepeſt dye) and adultery, in countries, where, as in Africa, polygamy was practiſed, was wont to be ſo ſeverely puniſhed, that a number of convictions on this ground, was not to be wondered at. He feared, if a ſale of theſe Criminals was haſtily done away, maſſacre would be the ſubſtitute; and he urged the ſanguinary temper of the Africans, which appeared from a variety of witneſſes, as a ground of this ſuſpicion.

His Hon. Friend had ſtated, that a full third of thoſe ſold to the ſlave-ſhips, were children; and had then aſked, as in juſt triumph of argument, "Have theſe committed crimes, have theſe been taken in war?" In anſwer to this, he declared, That women and children were often included in the maſſacres of ſavage Nations, engaged in war; and he quoted a Book, entitled, A State of Hudſon's Bay, mentioning the deſtruction of a young girl, by the Savages, at war, in proof of this aſſertion.

A Right Honourable Gentleman, of leading Abilities, had aſked, on a former day, "Is it an excuſe, for committing a robbery on Hounſlow Heath, to ſay, that another would commit it, adding murder alſo, if you did not?" This was begging the queſtion. A Trade for Slaves did not neceſſarily imply robbery or rapine. Not long ſince, Great Britain ſold her Convicts, indirectly at leaſt, to Slavery.——But he was no advocate for the Trade; it reſted on principles repugnant to the temper of his mind. He wiſhed it had never begun. He wiſhed it might ſoon terminate; but the means propoſed were not merely inadequate, but would preclude the effect. He had ſhown, that other States would ſuperſede, and even go beyond us in the Trade, if we left it. Where then, would be the improved manners and induſtry of the Africans?

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He therefore thought, that all argument reſpecting the improved agriculture, manufactures, and civilization of Africa, ought to be put out of the queſtion. A Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Burke) diſtinguiſhed for his genius, had ſaid, "That in adopting the meaſure propoſed, we muſt prepare to pay the price of our virtue." He was ready to pay his ſhare of that price; but, the object of purchaſe muſt be aſcertained. Was it the happineſs or the miſery of thouſands? Gentlemen muſt not be allured from their duty, by mere names. If they did not eſtimate the effect, it was not benevolence, but diſſipation.

Some perſons, in a high tone, had ſaid, "A traffic in human fleſh, was not to be borne with; let the conſequences be what they would, the national honour, glory, and character, required it's ſuppreſſion; the conſequences were not at our door." He anſwered, that his conſcience told him, that the conſequences were at our door, and though ſtateſmen might reſt every thing on a plauſible manifeſto of cauſe, the humbler moraliſt, meditating on peace and good will towards men, would venture to call ſuch ſtateſmen reſponſible for conſequences. He then ſpoke of the regulations reſpecting objects of ſale in Africa, demurrage on the Coaſt, tranſport to the Weſt Indies, or the Settlement of Slaves when arrived there. The Trade to Africa, he ſaid, muſt principally be aboliſhed in and from the Weſt Indies.

In regard to the Colonies, a ſudden Abolition would introduce oppreſſion, and defeat the purpoſes of humanity. We ought, alſo, rather to lead our Colonies into the way we deem right, than force them to it, eſpecially when Government had once protected, and even inſtituted the preſent courſe of trade. No violence, but preparatory experiment, ſhould be uſed in order to ſhow that nothing but extreme neceſſity would induce the Legiſlature to change it's ancient and it's own ſyſtem. He was perſuaded the Legiſlatures in the Weſt Indies would act wiſely and humanely, to attain the object pointed out to them; *that a natural increaſe of their Negroes might be effected by an improved ſyſtem of Legiſlation*; and that, in the reſult, the Slave-Trade would no longer be neceſſary.

He inſiſted that a direct Abolition of the Trade would cauſe both diſtreſs and diſaffection in our Colonies; that ſupplies were neceſſary for ſome period to come; that the Negroes did not now generally increaſe by birth; that the numerous White Servants and Apprentices, appropriated to themſelves a great number of Negro females, which cauſed the diſproportion of ſexes to be more material; that the gradation of ages was not yet duly filled, there not having been ſo great an attention to breeding ſome time ſince, as there was now; that the neglect of marriage, the diſſoluteneſs of morals, and the *inattention to infants*, were alſo evils which could not be overcome ſuddenly.

He ſpoke of the Planters, as oppreſſed with debts, and as being generally the Slaves of the Britiſh Creditors, that they could not afford to remit the induſtry of their Slaves, and that if their numbers were leſs, their work being more, the extent of their miſery could not be conceived without horror. He quoted Mr. Ottley, Chief Juſtice in St. Vincent's, after paying him ſome handſome compliments, in confirmation of this. Slaves, it was ſaid by him, *were liable to ſeiſure for their maſter's debts*, in default of other goods and chattels, *nor was there any proviſion in this caſe, againſt the ſeparation of families*, except as to the mother and infant child. Theſe ſeparations were one of the chief outrages complained of in Africa; why then ſhould we inſtitute new cauſes of ſuch ſeparation in the Weſt Indies? The confinement on board a ſlave-ſhip was alſo bitterly complained of; but under a diſtrain for debt, the poor Slave might linger in a gaol twice or thrice the time of a Middle Paſſage.

On it's own grounds, he moſt explicitly declared, that he could not be an advocate for the traffic in Slaves, on any one queſtion, even of natural expediency; but as a reſource, and he hoped but a temporary one, to our Weſt India Colonies, it was of ſuch importance as to touch the very exiſtence of the Britiſh Empire. He then ſtated the amount of exports from Great Britain to the Weſt Indies, in value above 1,600,000*l.* and it's imports above 3,700,000*l.* the exciſe and cuſtoms on which were about 1,600,000*l.* the ſhips being 570, and the tonnage above an eighth of the whole tonnage of theſe kingdoms.

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He then hinted at the collateral advantages of the Weſt India Trade, and ſaid that every thing he had ſtated, the Committee was requeſted to endanger, at leaſt, by a vote for immediate Abolition.

Sir William Young then made ſome obſervations on the volume of evidence relating to the Weſt India Planters, who he ſaid, in the courſe of this buſineſs, had been no way ſpared. He blamed, in ſtrong terms, the cenſure caſt upon them, and the cruel ſtories haſtily and lightly told. He adverted, with regret, to the invidious compariſons which degraded a Britiſh Slave-owner, below a Frenchman, a Spaniard, or a Dutchman, in the ſame circumſtances, obſerving, that one of our beſt comic writers diſcriminated better the pretenſions of our people. When wiſhing to ſhow benevolence in it's faireſt colours, he perſonified it in the character and conduct of the *Weſt Indian.*

He wiſhed that the Slave might become as ſecure, or even more ſo, than the Apprentice in this country, but it was neceſſary that the alarms concerning the Abolition of the Trade, ſhould, in the mean time, be quieted, and he rejoiced that the motion before the Houſe, was ſuch as to put the queſtion at iſſue.

He regretted all the haſty expreſſions which had been thrown out the day before, and the want of Chriſtian Charity, which they ſeemed to imply; and he truſted that the good ſenſe, and true benevolence of the Houſe, would reject the preſent motion.

Mr. MATTHEW MONTAGU ſpoke a few words in ſupport of the motion, which, he ſaid, he ought not to doubt, would be carried. After condemning the Trade in the ſtrongeſt manner, he declared, *That as long as he had life, he would uſe every faculty if his body and mind in endeavouring to promote it's Abolition.*

Lord JOHN RUSSEL ſaid, that, although it gave him much anxiety, he muſt vote againſt the Abolition. He was ready to admit, that the ideas attached to Slavery were repugnant to

our feelings; yet he conceived, that all the advantages that were ſuppoſed to reſult from the preſent motion, would prove viſionary and deluſive. It was only a feeble attempt, without the power, to ſerve the cauſe of humanity. We might relinquiſh the Trade; but the conſequence would be, that it would be taken up by other nations. The African Slave-Trade, his Lordſhip ſaid, might admit of many regulations; and, whenever a bill of regulation might come forward, no man would be more ready than himſelf to lend it his ſupport. In this way the rights of human nature might be aſſerted, without injuring one individual, or the commerce of the kingdom. His Lordſhip hoped he ſhould not incur very ſevere cenſure for what he had ſaid, as he was not ſenſible of having a *hard heart*, let his *underſtanding* be what it might. His heart was as free and as *acceſſible*, as the rights of juſtice and the cauſe of humanity required.

Mr. STANLEY (Agent for the Iſlands) though labouring with an indiſpoſition, thought this an occaſion in which he was called upon to refute the many falſe and malicious calumnies which had, for ſome years, gone abroad againſt the Planters in the Weſt India Settlements, and which, having been lately adopted and diſperſed from the ſeminaries of learning, and the pulpits of the church, places that ſhould be employed to better and more uſeful purpoſes, had at length produced the miſchievous meaſure that was now under the diſcuſſion of the Houſe. Repreſentations had been made of the miſchievous conſequences of holding any ſet of people in any ſituation of ſlavery whatever; and theſe declamations came blazoned out to the public in the moſt high-ſounding language, and were urged with as much violence of enthuſiaſm, as if there never before had been a *Slave* from the days of *Adam* to the preſent moment. He, on the contrary, maintained, that it appeared to be the intention of Providence, from the ſyſtem of the Univerſe, *That one ſet of men muſt always be Slaves to another*. This truth was as old as it was univerſal. It was recognized in every Hiſtory, and in every Æra; under every Government, and in every

every Religion. The Chriſtian Religion itſelf ſhowed no more repugnance to it than any other; and, in proof of this, he cited the authority of the Biſhop of Glouceſter (Dr. Halifax) drawn from a paſſage in St. Paul's Epiſtle to the Corinthians; and mentioned other paſſages as a farther confirmation of his, and the Biſhop of Glouceſter's, opinion.

He read over a number of documents, and went (though with rather a low voice) into a conſiderable length of argument to ſhow, that the Slaves were not captured in the manner deſcribed. It being the nature of all Savages to put their priſoners to death, he thought they ought to be thankful for being led into a ſtate of captivity, where their condition was much meliorated.

He alſo repreſented the ſtories, concerning their diſtreſſes in the Middle Paſſage, as exaggerations and falſehoods; and as to their treatment in the Weſt Indies, he was himſelf witneſs that it was, in general, highly indulgent and humane.

With regard to the poſſibility of encouraging their increaſe, by any other means or a better mode of treatment, he earneſtly prayed of Gentlemen to let him know how that could be effected. As a Planter, he would thank them for it; and he was ſure that if it could be made to appear practicable, neither he nor any of his brother Planters, would ever wiſh to purchaſe another Slave. It was abſurd to ſuppoſe that any ſet of men could be ſo blind to their own intereſt, as not to uſe the natural means of obtaining Slaves, if it was in their power. It was very well known that one Creole Slave was worth two Africans; and, ſetting humanity quite out of the queſtion, their intereſt muſt ſuggeſt that the propagation of Slaves was a better mode of increaſing their ſtock, than the conſtant purchaſe of imported Negroes, of whom, he confeſſed, that *one half very frequently died in the* SEASONING.

He then argued the impoſſibility of Beaſts doing the work of the Plantations; and amongſt other reaſons, he obſerved, that it would be impoſſible to ſupply them with food. A great part of the food, uſed by the Negroes and Whites alſo, was imported: it frequently happened, that, for eight months together, there was not a ſhower of rain in many of the iſlands. Their grain

grain was obliged to be kiln-dried for preſervation, and the idea of feeding a conſiderable number of cattle was, therefore, quite out of the queſtion.

Mr. Stanley, after having gone through a conſiderable detail of obſervations, concluded by objecting to the motion.

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH then roſe, and began by intreating the Committee to do him the juſtice to believe, that he would treſpaſs on their patience for as ſhort a time as the nature of what he had to ſay would permit: but that, notwithſtanding the able and eloquent manner in which the ſubject had been opened by his Honourable Friend, with whom he had long had the ſatisfaction of being a fellow-labourer in the cauſe, he ſhould ſtill have occaſion to go into ſome detail; and as he was aware it would be but unentertaining, it was the more neceſſary for him to requeſt their indulgence.

It had not been his intention to have taken the leaſt notice of the argument attempted to be drawn from *Scripture*, in ſupport of the Slave-Trade, becauſe, although he had ſeen it urged in ſome *pamphlets*, it had always appeared to him ſo extremely abſurd and ſuperficial, as to be totally undeſerving of any reply. He thought it adapted merely *ad captandum vulgus*, to impoſe on thoſe who never took the trouble of thinking; and he had imagined, that Gentlemen would have had more reſpect to the diſcernment of the Committee, than to have brought it forward there. Nor, though the Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt, had adverted to it, could he ſuppoſe, for a moment, that the good ſenſe of the Houſe could be miſled by a few perverted or miſapplied paſſages of Scripture, in direct oppoſition to the whole tenor and ſpirit of Chriſtianity, to the *theory* he might ſay, of almoſt every Religion which had ever appeared in the world. Whatever might be ingeniouſly advanced in debate, every man *muſt feel*, that the Slave-Trade could not exiſt an hour, if that excellent maxim, which lies at the very baſis of Chriſtian Morality, "To do unto others as we would that others ſhould do unto us," had it's proper influence on the conduct of men.

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The Honourable Gentleman had equally ſurpriſed him, Mr. Smith ſaid, by another of the arguments on which he had appeared to rely, the weakneſs of which was equally apparent; —"The Antiquity and Univerſality of Slavery." It was impoſſible not to ſee, that, from the mere exiſtence of any practice, not even a preſumption could be formed, in favour of it's juſtice or propriety. By this argument (if indeed it deſerved that appellation) every vice and crime might be defended, which had diſgraced mankind from the days of Cain, the firſt murderer, to the preſent times.—The Slaves of Antiquity, however, he obſerved, even under all the hardſhips they ſuffered, were in a ſituation far preferable to that of Negroes in the Weſt Indies. The ſtate of Slavery then was not ſo degrading as that in which the wretched Africans are held in theſe modern times: and a word, "Paterfamilias," uſed by the Honourable Gentleman, had reminded him of a paſſage which exemplified this, in the ſtrongeſt manner; "*Domini*," ſays Macrobius, "*a majoribus noſtris*, PATRESFAMILIAS, *ſervi* FAMILIARES "*appellati ſunt; quòd vellent, iis vocibus, a Domino omnem invi-*"*diam, a Servo omnem contumeliam, detrahere.*" "Our Anceſtors denominated the Maſter, *Father of the Family*, and the Slave *Domeſtic*; with the intention of removing all odium from the condition of the Maſter, and all contempt from that of the Servant."—Could this language be applied to the preſent ſtate of Weſt Indian Slavery?

It had been complained of, by many Gentlemen who eſpouſed the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion, that, in ſupporting their cauſe, they laboured under very great diſadvantages; and among others, that they had to contend againſt the moſt ſplendid abilities which the nation could boaſt. Though he was as little diſpoſed as any man, Mr. Smith ſaid, to depreciate thoſe admirable talents, on both ſides of the Houſe, which were ſo honourably united on this occaſion, in favour of juſtice and humanity; yet he knew that, amongſt his antagoniſts alſo, were men of great ability, which, he doubted not, would be exerted to the utmoſt in defence of the opinions they had adopted. But there was *one* diſadvantage, under which thoſe Gentlemen laboured, of great weight, indeed; ariſing from the nature of their cauſe, and

for which no talents could compenſate;—the impoſſibility of maintaining their ground fairly, on any of thoſe principles which every man within thoſe walls had been accuſtomed, from his infancy, to venerate as ſacred. He, and his friends, Mr. Smith ſaid, had lain under ſome diſadvantages alſo: a ridiculous charge of fanaticiſm had been alledged againſt them, which he regarded as totally unworthy of any formal reply. It would be more than ſufficient to quote, in anſwer, the words of Mr. Long, the Hiſtorian of Jamaica, where, addreſſing himſelf to thoſe Planters who were deſirous of attempting improvements in cultivation, &c. he adviſes them, "Not to be diverted by "partial views, vulgar prejudices, or the *ridicule which might* "*ſpring from weak minds*, from a benevolent attention to the "public good." Neither by ſuch, Mr. Smith ſaid, nor by any other, conſiderations, would he, or thoſe gentlemen with whom he had the honour to act, ever be diverted from the proſecution of their purpoſe. *They were convinced of the rectitude and high importance of their object, and were determined never to deſiſt from the Purſuit, till the End ſhould be completely attained.*

But they had to ſtruggle with ſome difficulties far more ſerious. The Weſt Indian intereſt which oppoſed them, was a *collected* body, and of great power, ariſing, not merely from extenſive mercantile connections, but alſo from the reſpectable characters of many of the individuals, and the high eſtimation in which they ſtood with the world. He was happy to be able, from intimate acquaintance, to bear his teſtimony to the juſtice of this opinion, in numerous inſtances; and one of the moſt fruitful and frequent ſources of the hardſhips and injuries which the Slaves endured, was, he doubted not, the abſence of ſuch Maſters, whoſe inclination would coincide with their intereſt, to attend to and protect them.

Artifice had alſo been employed, and unfair ſtatements, on various points, had been uſed, to impoſe on the Houſe, and on the Public. The *Abolition* of the Slave Trade, and the *Emancipation* of the Negroes now in the Colonies, had been ſo often, ſo long, and ſo pertinaciouſly confounded, and by ſome too, who, muſt have been better informed, that he could not avoid believing it had been purpoſely done, with the intent of throwing

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odium on this meaſure: and, with the ſame view, it's ſupporters had alſo been unjuſtly accuſed of having given birth to the late inſurrection in Dominica. A revolt certainly had happened there; but that Iſland was known to be particularly liable to ſuch diſorders; they had frequently occurred before:—nor, if this queſtion had never been agitated, would it have been at all improbable, that, in the courſe of three or four years (during which period the buſineſs had been under conſideration) ſuch an event ſhould have taken place in one or other of the Iſlands. But he was peculiarly happy in having to oppoſe, to any ſuch groundleſs accuſations, the authority of the Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt (Mr. Stanley) who, even in an attempt to fix the charge, had related circumſtances which amounted to an entire exculpation. He had expreſsly ſaid, that all had remained quiet till the diſturbances took place in the French Iſlands, after which ſome of *their* Negroes, *and ſome other perſons*, from ſome other places (but *who*, or from *whence*, it did not appear that the Honourable Gentleman knew) had found their way into Dominica, and had excited an inſurrection. And the Honourable Gentleman, as if *anxious* entirely to clear the movers of this queſtion from any ſhare of the imputed blame, had farther ſaid, that the Negroes now in the Iſlands *knew* the Britiſh Parliament *did not* intend to emancipate them, and were therefore diſſatisfied with the attempt to aboliſh the Trade, by which they imagined they ſhould be ſubjected to increaſed hardſhips. It muſt, therefore, on that ground, be abſurd to pretend, that the reſiſtance of their Maſters to the Abolition they deprecated, could excite their reſentment, or diſpoſe them to revolt.

Other fallacies had alſo been propagated, Mr. Smith ſaid, in order to enhance the importance of the African and Weſt Indian Trades to this country. Of the African Trade, it had been falſely ſaid, that the exports amounted annually to a million ſterling; whereas, from the report on the table, it appeared, that, at no period, had they ever riſen to 900,000*l.* and on an average, had amounted to little more than *half* a million; which included alſo, the articles intended for the purchaſe of African *produce*, the *return* for which was about 140,000*l.* per annum.

The Houſe had been informed, two years ago, by a Mr. King, that one Merchant in London had ſent goods to Africa, to the amount of 100,000*l.* in a year; in which, however, *the value of the ſhips was included*—an attempt at exaggeration ſo groſs, that he was ſure, had it been remarked at the time, the evidence would have been rejected with indignation; and indeed the teſtimony of any perſon, attended with ſuch a circumſtance, could not but be regarded throughout, with a degree of ſuſpicion.

The Eaſt India Trade was alſo ſaid very much to depend on the Weſt Indian and the African. The exports of Eaſt Indian Commodities to the Weſt Indies was trifling; and a principal point in which that Trade might be ſaid to be connected with the African, was this—Saltpetre, the main ingredient in the manufacture of Gunpowder, was largely imported from the Eaſt Indies; and of 2,700,000 pounds weight of Gunpowder, which had been exported in a year from this country, to *all the world*, ONE HALF was ſent to Africa alone; for the purpoſes, doubtleſs, of maintaining peace and encouraging civilization among it's various tribes! Following the ſame line of argument, 4 or 5000 perſons were reported to depend, for their very exiſtence, on the *particular* manufacture of Guns for Africa; and this branch of the trade was deſcribed as *totally different* from every other. ——In what the difference conſiſted, the informant omitted to mention; but that defect was ſupplied, by one of the witneſſes, who had repeatedly ſeen Negroes maimed by the *burſting* of theſe Guns, and who had been told by them, That they killed more from the Butt than from the Muzzle. Another witneſs had ſtated, That on the *Sea coaſt*, the Natives are afraid to fire a *Trade*-gun.

In the Weſt Indian Commerce, 240,000 tons of ſhipping, and 21,000 ſeamen, were ſtated to be employed; but here again Deception intruded itſelf. This account was not, as Gentlemen might imagine, that of the ſhips engaged in the intercourſe between Great Britain and her Colonies only; but included every veſſel, ſmall and great, which went from the Britiſh Weſt Indies to the Continent of America, and to the foreign Iſlands; and, what was yet more unfair, in order to ſwell the ſum, it

included too, all the *repeated voyages* of *each*, throughout the year. The *actual* quantity of ſhipping, Mr. Smith ſaid, occupied in the Weſt Indian Trade, both from Great Britain *and Ireland*, little exceeded *half* that which had been aſſerted; nor did the number of ſailors, ſupported by that Trade alone, amount to 10,000!

In a ſimilar manner, had the Iſlands themſelves been overrated. While, from official documents, their value had been computed, for the information of his Majeſty and the Privy Council, at 36 millions, the Planters had thought proper almoſt to double the ſum, and eſtimate them at 70. The truth, however, might poſſibly lie between theſe extremes. Mr. Smith ſaid, he was ſorry to have taken up ſo much of the time of the Committee on this part of the ſubject; but that he thought it neceſſary to obſerve on, and to expoſe, miſrepreſentations ſo palpable and exceſſive; while, at the ſame time, he was very willing to allow, that our Weſt Indian Trade and Dependencies were of ſo much real importance, as not to require the aid of ſuch exaggeration.

He would next proceed to take notice of various opinions and aſſertions, which had fallen from different Gentlemen, in the courſe of the Debate.——The Honourable Member for Liverpool (Col. Tarleton) had diſclaimed every attempt to intereſt the Feelings or Paſſions of the Houſe, but had deſired to call them to *Reaſon* and to *Accounts*. Many Gentlemen remembered when, "Queſtion of Feeling," was rather an obnoxious phraſe; but, if ever there were a queſtion of *Feeling*, a queſtion which ought to intereſt the beſt and nobleſt Feelings of the human heart, Mr. Smith ſaid, it was this; but that he did not wiſh to have the point decided on that ground *alone*. He alſo deſired to draw the attention of the Committee to Reaſon and Accounts—to the voice of Reaſon, inſtead of the clamour of Prejudice, and to Accounts, in the place of idle and ill-founded apprehenſions. The reſult, he doubted not, would be a full perſuaſion, that the meaſure propoſed, was equally ſanctioned by Policy, and required by Juſtice. He indeed, was convinced, that true Policy, and ſtrict Juſtice, were inſeparable; and that no country could ſuffer, in any of it's eſſential intereſts, by the

moſt ſcrupulous adherence to the principles of rectitude and the dictates of humanity.——In the preſent caſe, however, he thought it totally unneceſſary to recur to Humanity, as to a principle which might grant what Juſtice might deny; for that he would concede every point to his adverſaries, and utterly abandon his object, if it were not demonſtrably clear, that Juſtice itſelf, in the moſt rigid and confined ſenſe of the term, loudly and abſolutely demanded the Abolition of this horrible traffic.

The Honourable Gentleman had enlarged on the iniquity of depriving the Traders of Liverpool of a Buſineſs, "on which "were founded their Honour and their Fortunes." On what part of it they founded their *Honour*, Mr. Smith declared, it was impoſſible for him to conjecture; but, of this he was confident, that no *Weſt Indian* Gentleman, in that Committee, would riſe to defend the *Honour* of the African Trade. Among many other circumſtances, equally *honourable*, it had appeared, in evidence, that the Agents, employed in actually carrying on this Buſineſs, had ſyſtematically practiſed every Fraud and Villainy, which the meaneſt and moſt unprincipled cunning could ſuggeſt, to impoſe on ignorance; and yet, with unparalleled aſſurance, were the Africans accuſed of Treachery and Deceit —ſhame on them—with ſuch brilliant examples of integrity before their eyes!

If there were any circumſtance, in the courſe of this proceeding, Mr. Smith ſaid, which he had peculiarly regretted, it was a defect to which the Hon. Gentleman had adverted, that the evidence had not been taken *on oath*. Numberleſs facts had been related by *Eye-witneſſes*, called in ſupport of the Abolition, ſo dreadfully atrocious, that the very magnitude of the crimes, their horrible enormity, rendered them almoſt, if not entirely, incredible, to perſons acquainted only with ſuch a ſtate of Society, as exiſts in this country; they ſeemed rather, to uſe the expreſſion of Oſſian, like "The Hiſtories of the Days of other Times." This procured for the Trade to which they owed their birth, a ſpecies of acquittal which it could not have obtained, had the Committee been authorized to have removed all objection to the validity of their teſtimony, by the ſanction of an oath. He apprehended alſo, it would have had the

the farther advantage of making ſome perſons rather more guarded in the teſtimony they had given. Captain Knox might not then perhaps have told the Committee, that 600 Slaves could have *comfortable* room at night, in his veſſel of about 140 tons; when, by a calculation given in, by another of their own witneſſes, and ſtrained to the very utmoſt towards the ſame point, it appeared, that ſuch a veſſel could afford no more than five feet ſix inches in length, and 15 inches in breadth, to 418 only, or about two thirds of his number; nor, perhaps, would he have maintained that, in another ſhip of 120 tons, he had carried 130 *tons* of *water only*, beſides *five hundred* perſons, with ſufficient proviſions and ſtores, &c. for them all. Mr. Smith ſaid, the thing was impoſſible; the moſt informed knew it was not true, and the moſt ignorant could not ſwallow it.—On account of theſe, and an infinite number of inconſiſtencies, equally flagrant, which he could mention, he ſincerely wiſhed the witneſſes had been required to give their evidence on oath.

The next point on which he ſhould obſerve, Mr. Smith ſaid, was of great conſequence, and had been much inſiſted on—the importance of the Slave-Trade, as a nurſery for ſeamen. In full confirmation of every word which had been aſſerted on this head, by the advocates of Abolition, and to the confuſion of thoſe who had contradicted them, it had appeared, by the Muſter-rolls of the Slave-veſſels, brought from Liverpool (the production of which would have been avoided if poſſible) that, conſiderably more than one fifth part of the men employed in them, actually died in the ſervice, amounting to ſeveral hundreds annually, excluſive of very many who were diſcharged and periſhed in the Weſt Indies; and yet, the Hon. Colonel had been inſtructed by his Conſtituents, to ſay, that, notwithſtanding this vaſt loſs, unheard of, almoſt impoſſible, in any branch of legitimate Commerce, it was ſtill a nurſery for ſeamen; for that, of about 3000 men annually ſailing from England, 1600, or one-half, were landſmen, and therefore, that, though 600 or 700 ſhould die, a great number of *ſeamen* were continually forming. Not to dwell on the expenſive cruelty of forming theſe ſeamen, by the yearly deſtruction of ſo many hundreds, whom theſe Gentlemen of Liverpool ſeemed entirely to diſregard, if

they

they could prove them to be only *Engliſhmen* and not *Sailors*, Mr. Smith ſaid, he was aſtoniſhed that theſe people ſhould have no more reſpect for their Honourable Repreſentative, than to expoſe him to the unpleaſant circumſtance of having his aſſertions directly contradicted by the cleareſt and moſt undeniable evidence.—Not only did it appear by the *Muſter-rolls* from Briſtol, that the proportion of landſmen little exceeded one-twelfth part, but the proper Officers of the Port of *Liverpool itſelf*, whoſe buſineſs it was to be acquainted with the ſubject, had, in their anſwers to the Privy Council, expreſsly ſtated the proportion from *thence* to be, not *half*, but *one ſixteenth* part only! In the face, however, of the moſt glaring facts, ſome perſons had been ſufficiently bold, or uninformed, alſo to ſay, that the mortality in theſe veſſels did not exceed that of other Trades, in the *tropical climates*. The ſame documents, by which we learn'd that, in this waſting Traffic, 23 *per cent.* of the men were deſtroyed, informed us, that even in the *Weſt Indian Ships*, only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ *per cent.* were loſt, including every caſualty; and indeed he ſhould very much alter his opinion of the value of the latter Commerce, if it were poſſible for human ingenuity to prove it equally deſtructive. But the very men, under whoſe management this mortality had been conſtantly occurring, for a ſucceſſion of years, *coolly* informed us, that much of it might be avoided by proper regulations. He would be glad to know then, Mr. Smith ſaid, for how much *they* would have to anſwer, who, knowing this, had neither publicly propoſed, nor in their practice adopted, ſuch regulations. Excluſive of another and a *more ſerious* account, which they would have to render, on *them* their country had a right to charge the deſtruction of multitudes of their fellow-citizens! They were not, *they could not be*, ignorant of what was perpetually under their obſervation; but their whole ſouls were occupied with another object; their attention was alone directed to the ultimate profit of the voyage; and, *any farther than as it diminiſhed their expences*, the waſte of a periſhing crew was a trifle beneath their concern!

Objections had been raiſed to a calculation brought forward by his Honourable Friend (Mr. Wilberforce) on a former occaſion,

caſion, in which the average loſs of the *Slaves* on board was ſtated at 12½ *per cent.* It was not, he ſaid, of great conſequence whether that proportion was perfectly exact. He was himſelf perſuaded, that, taking in all circumſtances, the Hon. Gentleman had not exceeded the truth; but that, for a ſeries of years, not leſs than *one tenth* had ſo periſhed, he would challenge thoſe concerned in the Traffic to diſprove. Much evidence had been produced on the ſubject; but both the perſons and the voyages had been generally ſelected by thoſe who poſſeſſed almoſt all the information, nor had any one of them thought it *prudent* to diſcloſe the black catalogue of Death, throughout the whole ſeries of his concerns, except Mr. Anderſon of London, a Gentleman, he believed, of very fair reputation, *and whoſe* engagements in this line had been *very inconſiderable. His* loſs, indeed, on the trifling number he had exported, had been only 3 *per cent*; but, unfortunately for the credit of the Slave-Traders of Liverpool and Briſtol, it appeared, on the face of the account he had delivered, that his veſſels had not taken above 3 *fourths of that number* in proportion to the tonnage, which *they* had uniformly and repeatedly ſtated to be *abſolutely neceſſary to the very exiſtence of their Trade*; and it appeared alſo, that a commerce in the produce of the country was Mr. Anderſon's favourite object.

Another Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Groſvenor) had, on the preceding day, attributed the protraction of this buſineſs to thoſe who had introduced it; but very forgetfully and erroneouſly: for, Mr. Smith ſaid, notwithſtanding the eagerneſs which it's enemies had frequently expreſſed to bring on the deciſion, the original motion for farther evidence, beyond that contained in the Privy Council's Report, which firſt occaſioned delay, was *their's*. And, in the examination of witneſſes, in the laſt Parliament, *they* had occupied by far the largeſt portion of the time employed; while, in the preſent Seſſion, when he and his friends had not been much interrupted, they had not exceeded the limits which the Houſe had aſſigned them. The Honourable Gentleman had farther ſaid, that Great Britain had the ſame right, by Natural Law, to carry on this Trade, that any other nation poſſeſſed; that it was *impoſſible* to aboliſh

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it; and that the Committee had better be eaſy and quiet, for that *they* were happy. His firſt poſition, Mr. Smith did not mean to deny. We *undoubtedly* poſſeſſed a right to the Trade *equal to that of any other nation*; but what that right could be, he was unable to imagine; nor had he been ſo fortunate as to diſcover the *Law* on which it was founded, in any code or ſyſtem, of *natural*, or any other law, with which he had ever met. As to *impoſſibility*, none certainly exiſted of forbidding the farther importation of Slaves into our own Colonies, and beyond this the Motion did not extend.

To the Honourable Gentleman's laſt obſervation, he would reply, that it was not on account of any ſuppoſed unhappineſs of Parliament, that it was called on to decide the queſtion. In their individual ſituations, Gentlemen undoubtedly were happy; but did it, therefore the leſs behoove them to conſider the happineſs of others? And, was the ſtate of Africa happy? Was the ſituation of the Slaves a happy one? The Trade was replete with fraud, cruelty, and rapine. The facts were acknowledged, and on record: even Mr. Long, before quoted, confeſſed, "That, in Africa it was certainly the cuſtom to go to "war, for the purpoſe of making Slaves."—To deny theſe charges, had been truly owned by Mr. Edwards, *even in the Aſſembly of Jamaica*, to be no better than "*Mockery and Inſult.*" That it was indeed mockery and inſult, Mr. Smith ſaid, he would never ceaſe to repeat in the ears of every one who ſhould attempt to contradict what had been ſo inconteſtibly proved; and, for himſelf, he was ready to declare, that, as an Engliſhman, he ſhould never be happy, while he conſidered his country as contributing, by perſevering in this Traffic, to perpetuate miſery, and to encourage the commiſſion of every ſpecies of crime!

From the conceſſion of his Honourable Friend, of the already meliorated ſtate of the Slaves in our Colonies, and his aſſertion that an increaſe was actually begun, it had been argued, that *immediate* Abolition would be a violent, and, therefore, an imprudent, meaſure; and that it might affect public credit. But ſurely nothing could be plainer than that an increaſe commenced, was the beſt poſſible *Anſwer* to the charge

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of *Violence*, as it precluded all danger of injury to the Iſlands, unleſs from their own ſubſequent miſconduct; and (though he would chearfully and confidently commit the queſtion of *Public Credit* into the hands of a Right Honourable Gentleman) yet, he could not avoid obſerving, that that argument was, like many others, indeed, which Gentlemen had uſed, a mere *petitio principii*—an aſſumption of the great point of the controverſy.

In what remained for him to obſerve, Mr. Smith ſaid, he ſhould proceed with the leſs ſatisfaction, as a wide difference of opinion might lead him to treat very lightly the arguments of his Honourable Friend, who had opened the Debate of that day (Sir William Young) by whom, however, he knew he ſhould be acquitted of any perſonal diſreſpect. The Honourable Baronet, with ſome other Gentlemen, acknowledging the object aimed at, to be in itſelf highly praiſeworthy and deſirable, had argued againſt the propoſed meaſure, on the ground of it's inefficacy to the attainment of the end; for, that, though we might inſtantly *abandon* the Trade, it was impoſſible for us totally to ſuppreſs it. Allowing then this impoſſibility of a total and immediate ſuppreſſion, were there no important advantages to be gained by our dereliction of the Commerce? Whether we conſidered our own honour, or the probable efficacy of example, would it be nothing publicly to recognize and eſtabliſh a great and juſt principle of conduct, in an affair of ſuch vaſt moment? In the extermination of every evil, and eſpecially of thoſe which were fortified by the ſanction of time and authority, it was neceſſary that ſome one ſhould lead the way. Let the Britiſh Parliament then, as became the Senate of a virtuous and enlightened people, bear it's decided teſtimony againſt this flagrant iniquity: let it maintain it's foremoſt rank among the Nations, by ſetting a noble example, and he would not affront the Houſe by the ſuppoſition, that it's conduct would have no influence on the other countries of Europe. But ſhould all feelings of honour, or of generous emulation, in ſuch a cauſe, fail to operate, he doubted not that France, and Spain, and Holland, and Denmark, would ſoon learn, from our experience, that, by proper management, ſuch as it was no leſs the duty

than the intereſt of every country to enforce, American Colonies could be cultivated without the neceſſity of continual ſupplies, equally expenſive and diſgraceful. Nay, he was perfectly convinced, from a long and careful inveſtigation, that, in moſt of the Iſlands, it was merely the exiſtence of this ſupply which prevented the actual increaſe from being, even now, perceived.

The reaſoning of the Honourable Baronet, on the contrary, he was ſorry to think, tended to the perpetuation of the abuſe; as univerſal concurrence in any political meaſure, however wiſe, was not to be expected. Every man knew that the cuſtom of ſelling their priſoners of war into Slavery, exiſted among even the moſt civilized States of Antiquity; and no one was ſo chimerical as to imagine, that it would ever have ceaſed, had it been neceſſary to have waited for it's Abolition till all nations, in general aſſembly, had renounced it by mutual conſent. But we might do more than merely lay down principles, or propoſe examples: we might, *in fact*, *diminiſh the Evil* itſelf immediately, by no inconſiderable part—the whole of our own ſupply; for he could not at all agree with the Honourable Baronet, in what ſeemed to him a commercial paradox, that taking out of an open trade, by far the largeſt cuſtomer, and leſſening the conſumption of the article, would increaſe both the competition and the demand, and, of courſe, all thoſe miſchiefs which *he allowed* to be the uniform conſequences. Nor could he admit, in exculpation of this Trade, that it ought not to be made anſwerable for thoſe acts of barbarity with which the wars of Savages always were, and ever had been, ſtained; or that, by it's *kind* interference, many were only doomed to perpetual Slavery, who would otherwiſe be conſigned to deſtruction. He ſhould have conſidered theſe cruelties as affording another, and a moſt powerful, motive, for putting a period to a *certain* and *acknowledged cauſe* of theſe wars, rather than as a reaſon for ſuffering the cauſe to exiſt, for the ſake of an uncertain and diſputable alleviation of the evils it occaſioned. And, That the civilization of the Africans was promoted by their intercourſe with the Europeans, as at preſent conducted, was utterly void of all foundation, had appeared moſt undeniably from the tenour

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of the evidence. In dreſs, in manners, and in *diſhoneſty*, they had, indeed, aſſimilated much with thoſe who frequented their coaſts; but the greateſt degree of induſtry, and the leaſt corruption of morals, generally prevailed where they were leaſt acquainted with the benefits of this *civilizing* connection.

To relieve the Continent of Africa from the miſeries occaſioned by famine, was another of the benign reaſons for continuing to excite wars, and to carry off it's inhabitants. That famines had ſometimes occurred, he did not doubt; that they were either very frequent or very deſtructive, the proof was extremely ſlender indeed; but that they ſhould annually viſit thoſe devoted countries, and with ſuch arithmetic exactneſs as to render neceſſary a remedy ſo violent in it's execution, but ſo uniform in its quantity, was a circumſtance moſt extraordinary —ſo wonderful indeed, that, could it once be proved, he ſhould conſider it as a far better argument in favour of the *divine approbation* of the Slave-Trade, than any which had ever yet been produced.

As to the effect of the Abolition in the Weſt Indies, Mr. Smith ſaid, he was convinced, notwithſtanding the arguments which had been urged, that ſo far from being ruinous, it would give weight to every humane regulation which had been, or ſhould be, made; by ſubſtituting a certain and an obvious intereſt, in the place of one depending on chances and calculation. An Honourable Gentleman had ſaid, that, were the Planters but convinced of the *poſſibility* of cultivating their eſtates, without farther importations of Negroes, they would be happy to be freed from the heavy expenſe of purchaſing thoſe ſupplies. This conviction, Mr. Smith ſaid, he believed, might be attained, if their *reaſon* alone required it: for, of all the legion of authorities which the Honourable Gentleman had brought to prove the impoſſibility for which he contended, there was ſcarcely one, which might not be preſſed to ſerve more effectually againſt him. Almoſt every Planter he had named, had found his Negroes *increaſe* under the good treatment he profeſſed to have given them.—And, in the Iſlands of Barbadoes and Dominica, if, on the one hand, the proper uſage of Slaves had been proved by the reſpective Governors, it was

alſo at leaſt equally incontrovertible, from the evidence, that importations were not requiſite to keep up their numbers. To the ſame point, and with equal ill ſucceſs, Lord Macartney, who had reſided three years in the Weſt Indies, and whoſe character he highly reſpected, had been quoted; and what had his Lordſhip ſaid on the ſubject? When the queſtion was firſt put to him, in the Committee, Whether it would be prudent to aboliſh the Slave-Trade, his Lordſhip had anſwered, That he was an incompetent judge. His Lordſhip was aſked the ſame queſtion a ſecond time, and gave the ſame anſwer. Yet his Lordſhip, it was evident, knew juſt as much of the buſineſs as ſeveral other Governors and Military perſons who had been called, who, nevertheleſs, in ſupport of preconceived opinions, had ſpoken very *decidedly*, from very incompetent information. Nor had ſome other Gentlemen been more cautious.—Of the great Iſland of Jamaica, which contained more than one half of the Slaves in the Weſt Indies, it had been ſeriouſly aſſerted, by ſeveral witneſſes, that *all poſſible means* had been there uſed to keep up the ſtock by breeding, although it was allowed, that the Morals of the Slaves had been totally neglected, and that the Sugar Planters preferred buying a larger proportion of males than females; both which circumſtances were acknowledged to be, in a high degree, unfavourable to population.

The great misfortune was, that *Prejudice*, not Reaſon, was the enemy to be ſubdued; and he was ſorry to ſay, that the prejudices of the Weſt Indians, on theſe points, were numerous and inveterate. An Hiſtorian of their own body, ſpeaking of the various difficulties raiſed againſt any propoſed improvements, had deſcribed them in terms, which *he* could ſcarcely have uſed, without incurring their reſentment; as "*abſurd*," "*antiquated*," and even "*deteſtable*;" and yet, that, with reſpect to the *Negroes*, this Gentleman himſelf was under the influence of the blindeſt prejudice, his own words afforded irrefragable proof.—He characteriſed them *generally*, as replete with the extreme degree of every evil quality, unallayed with the ſmalleſt mixture of any good whatſoever; and juſtified the practice of confining them in chains on board the African ſhips, on account of their "bloody, cruel, and malicious diſpoſitions:"

ſitions." And though, after having given an account of ſome of the Aborigines of Jamaica, who had "miſerably periſhed in "caves whither they had retired to eſcape the tyranny of the "Spaniards," he added, in language worthy of an enlightened and philoſophic hiſtorian, "leaving a glorious monument of "their having diſdained to ſurvive the loſs of their liberty and "their country," he was yet incapable of perceiving, that this natural love of liberty might operate as ſtrongly and as laudably in the African Negro, as in the Indian of Jamaica.

He was yet more concerned to acknowledge, Mr. Smith ſaid, that theſe prejudices were farther ſtrengthened by reſentment againſt thoſe perſons who had brought forward, to the public eye, circumſtances, by which the ſtate of Legiſlation and of Society in the Weſt Indies, was undoubtedly deeply diſgraced; and who had, to uſe their expreſſions, impertinently interfered in the management of their concerns. He was not at all ſurpriſed that men of reputation, of honour and of humanity, ſhould feel quick reſentments at finding themſelves involved, to a certain degree, in the diſgrace of crimes, of which they knew themſelves incapable; and the commiſſion of which, many, for want either of information or attention, were diſpoſed to diſbelieve or even to deny.

In exculpation of his friends and himſelf, Mr. Smith ſaid, he muſt tell ſuch Gentlemen, that the relations which had been given were no leſs diſgraceful than *true*, and that, on this head, they had proceeded, not wantonly, but tenderly, in the buſineſs—that the facts which, out of many others, had appeared, they had thought it abſolutely neceſſary to produce, not with the view of fixing an unmerited ſtigma, either on the whole body of Weſt Indians, or much leſs on innocent and valuable individuals; but to prove the degraded and neglected ſtate in which the Slaves had been ſuffered to exiſt: which had incontrovertibly appeared, not from any evidence that *extreme* ill treatment was the *general ſyſtem*, but from the *frequency*, the *notoriety*, and, beyond all, the *impunity*, of various ſpecies both of legal, and of illegal abuſe.

That they were expoſed to much miſery in conſequence of their ſituation, was not only true in fact; it might have been previouſly

previouſly aſſerted, without fear of contradiction, from a knowledge, of their circumſtances, and of the pernicious effects of arbitrary power on the hearts, even of the beſt of men. Far worſe conſequences might reaſonably be expected, as an Honourable Gentleman had well obſerved, from a union of the three characters of Party, Judge, and Executioner, too often in men unprincipled, uneducated, and prompted by intereſt alſo, to acts of ſeverity. The Slave too, was more unfortunately ſituated even than the brute; as, being capable, from the ſuperiority of his nature, of exciting, in a higher degree, the paſſions of his tyrant, he was liable to experience more violent effects of his reſentment. And *ſuch* effects were ſometimes produced, and *openly exhibited* as would, in this country, excite a tumult of deteſtation and abhorrence. General Tottenham had given in evidence, that, in 1780, in the public ſtreets of Bridge-Town, the capital of Barbadoes, he met one of the moſt deplorable objects which the human eye perhaps ever beheld. "A "youth about nineteen," to uſe his own words, "entirely "naked, with an iron collar about his neck, having five long "projecting ſpikes—his body, both before and behind, was co-"vered with wounds; his belly and thighs were almoſt cut to "pieces, with running ulcers all over them, and a finger might "have been laid into ſome of the wheals. He could not ſit "down becauſe his hinder part was mortified, and it was impoſ-"ſible for him to lie down on account of the prongs of his col-"lar." He came to the General and ſupplicated for relief which, of courſe, was granted. The General aſked him who had inflicted on him ſo dreadful a puniſhment? It was plainly not the Judicial Authority who had inflicted it. Could any Court have given ſuch a ſentence, they would have been hunted like wild beaſts from the face of the earth! The youth told the General, "it was his Maſter who had inflicted the wounds;" and becauſe he then *could* not work, this Maſter, in the ſame ſpirit of perverſion which extorts from Scripture a juſtification of the Slave-Trade, had fulfilled the Chriſtian and Apoſtolic maxim, by giving him nothing to eat. If, Mr. Smith ſaid, to uſe the language of Mr. Roſs, he wiſhed to "harrow up their feelings," he could quote many other inſtances. But he had ſelected this, as equally horrible in it's nature, and indiſputable in it's authority:

and

and the point to which he directed it was, to ſhow the wretched ſtate of the Slaves, and to prove that there muſt be ſomething fundamentally wrong in the Laws and State of a Society, where ſuch a circumſtance could *publicly* exiſt at all, much leſs *unpuniſhed*, and almoſt unregarded. If, in the ſtreets of London, but a dog were to be ſeen lacerated like this poor, miſerable *man*, how would the cruelty of the wretch be execrated who ſhould have ſo abuſed even a brute?

Mr. Smith then ſaid, he was very ſorry to have occupied ſo much of the time of the Committee; but, in order to give Gentlemen, in one view, the ſtrongeſt proof he was able, of the low eſtimation in which Negroes were held, from the ſtrength of old cuſtoms, and deeply rooted prejudices, and of their debaſed and unprotected ſtate, he would take the liberty, before he ſat down, to relate two circumſtances, *in contraſt*, with a few obſervations. Mr. Edwards, in his ſpeech before the Jamaica Aſſembly, having occaſion to mention a "Rebellion," *(as it is called)* of the Negroes, very pathetically told the following Story:

"The Rebels ſurrounded the dwelling-houſe, and ſeized "their unhappy miſtreſs. She was young, beautiful, meek, "modeſt and unoffending, and was in bed with a lovely infant, "when the bloody Savages demanded her perſon. Reſiſtance "and prayers were equally fruitleſs. The female Slaves who "attended her, dared not to expreſs their pity, if pity they felt; "but, having thrown a looſe robe over her, delivered the "miſerable victim into their hands, and ſhe heard the Savages "calmly deliberate on the means of putting her to death in tor-"ment. It happened, however, that her perſon and appear-"ance excited the appetite of the Ringleader, who declared "he would preſerve her to be his Miſtreſs. The others re-"luctantly conſented, and the next object of their cruelty was "the child, which they devoted to inſtant deſtruction. Nature "now reſumed her ſeat, in the boſom of the unfortunate mo-"ther. She ſcreamed aloud, and claſping the knees of him "who had ſpared her life, implored him to ſave her infant. "She implored in vain. Holding up the poor babe by the feet "in the Mother's ſight, they cleft it in twain with a hatchet."

Mr.

Mr. Edwards proceeded to ſay, " that his audience would pro-
" bably think, after hearing the account which he had then
" read, that no puniſhment could be too ſevere—no torments
" too great, for ſuch horrible exceſſes. Nevertheleſs, he was
" of a different opinion; he thought that ſimple death, unac-
" companied with any circumſtances of cruelty, ſhould be the
" utmoſt exertion of human authority over our unhappy fel-
" low-creatures."

Torments, however, in theſe caſes, always had been inflicted, of the moſt horrible nature: the puniſhment uſed to be *gibbetting alive*, expoſing them to periſh by the gradual effects of hunger, thirſt, and a parching ſun; in which ſituation they had been known to ſuffer the moſt excruciating agonies for nine days, with a fortitude ſcarcely credible, never uttering a ſingle groan. And yet, without any attempt to leſſen the mingled ſentiment of horror and compaſſion, which every one muſt feel, or to juſtify the barbarity of their conduct; it ought to be remembered, that theſe exceſſes were committed by ignorant Savages, who had been dragged from all they held moſt dear, whoſe patience had been exhauſted by a cruel and loathſome confinement during their tranſportation, and their reſentment wound up to the higheſt pitch of fury, by the Driver's laſh, the utmoſt ſeverity of which, their reluctance to labour (for ſtrangers and oppreſſors) had doubtleſs excited.

The other ſtory, Mr. Smith ſaid, which he ſhould place in contraſt with the affecting narrative he had juſt related, was the plain, unornamented tale of a common ſeaman, who was an eyewitneſs to the fact, on board a ſlave-ſhip; and he then read as follows, in the words of the evidence: " A child of
" about ten months old took ſulk, and would not eat. The
" Captain took up the child, and flogged him with a cat—
" D—n you,' ſaid he, " I'll make you eat, or I'll kill you.'
" From this, and other ill treatment, the child's legs ſwelled,
" and the Captain ordered ſome water to be made hot, for
" abating the ſwelling." But even his tender mercies were cruel; for " the cook putting his hand into the water, ſaid it was
" too hot. 'D—n him,' ſaid the Captain, 'put his feet in."
" The child was put into the water, and the nails and ſkin came

" all

" all off his feet. Oiled cloths were then put round them. The " child was then tied to a heavy log, and two or three days " afterwards, the Captain caught it up again and ſaid, 'I will " make you eat, or I will be the death of you.' He imme- " diately flogged the child again; and, in a quarter of an hour, " it *died.*"——One would have imagined, that the moſt ſavage cruelty would here have been ſatiated; but, extraordinary as it might appear, of this deteſtable tranſaction the moſt deteſtable part yet remained. After the infant was dead, he would not ſuffer any of the people on deck to throw the body overboard, but called the *Mother*, the wretched *Mother*, to perform this laſt ſad office to her murdered child. Unwilling, as it might naturally be ſuppoſed ſhe was, to comply, " he beat her," regardleſs of the indignant murmurs of her fettered countrymen, whom, in the barbarous plenitude of ſecure tyranny, he permitted to be ſpectators of this horrible ſcene—" he beat her, till " he made her take up the child and carry it to the ſide of the " veſſel, and then ſhe dropped it into the ſea, turning her head " the other way, that ſhe might not ſee it!" Mr. Smith aſked the Committee if ever they had heard of ſuch a deed? *(on which ſome inconſiderate few laughed)* and on hearing it, he declared, with great indignation, that he ſhould not have thought it poſſible for any one man in that Committee, to have betrayed ſuch total want of feeling, and that he was almoſt aſhamed of being a Member of the *Aſſembly*, in which ſo diſgraceful a circumſtance had happened. But it would naturally be aſked, " Was not this CAPTAIN alſo gibbeted?" Alas! although the execrable barbarity of the European exceeded that of the Africans, almoſt as much as his opportunities of inſtruction had been greater than their's, no notice whatſoever was taken of this horrible action; and ten thouſand ſimilar cruelties had been committed in this abominable Trade, with equal impunity. Here, indeed, was the point to be moſt cenſured and lamented; for, if the perpetrators had been brought to juſtice, he ſhould not have thought the facts themſelves more deſerving of being forced on the unwilling attention of the Houſe, than the cruelty of a Brownrigg, who had been execrated and puniſhed; or than that of the man who murdered his wife the laſt

week, who, he hoped, would alſo ſuffer the puniſhment due to his crime. What excited his indignation and regret, Mr. Smith ſaid, was, that thoſe (and they were not a few) who, in the proſecution of the African Trade, had been guilty of ſuch enormities, had eſcaped with abſolute *impunity*; and, that, if in the Weſt Indies, a bright exception had occaſionally happened in favour of Juſtice, the inſtances were too rare, and the puniſhments too inadequate to the offence, to produce any beneficial effect. On theſe grounds, therefore, among others, he ſhould give his decided and cordial vote for *immediate* Abolition, as that which, in his opinion, alone afforded the proſpect of an adequate remedy for the dreadful diſorders which prevailed in Africa; for the cruelty and deſtruction of the Middle Paſſage; and would tend, though gradually, yet more efficaciouſly than any other plan which could be deviſed, to meliorate the ſituation of the Negroes now in the Iſlands, who at preſent enjoyed ſcarcely any other protection from the moſt capricious or ſevere tyrant, but that of laws, for *them*, almoſt without ſanction, and of Courts, which totally rejected their evidence.

Mr. COURTENAY ſaid, that he had heard, laſt night, the eloquent, pathetic and forcible ſpeech, of the Honourable Mover of the queſtion, with much ſympathy and conviction; nor had his ſentiments been at all ſhaken by any thing that he had heard on the other ſide.

By way of remark on what had fallen from the Honourable Baronet (Sir William Young) he obſerved, that it was a miſtake to ſuppoſe the Slave-Trade, if abandoned by us, would fall into the hands of France. It ought to be recollected, with what approbation the motion for aboliſhing the Trade, made by the late M. Mirabeau, had been received; although the ſituation of the French Colonies might not have made it prudent to carry the meaſure into immediate execution. It was not to be doubted, that, if the Parliament of this country ſhould begin, ſo wiſe and enlightened a Body, as the National Aſſembly, would quickly follow their example. The cauſe of Juſtice and Humanity, in both theſe Nations, now cemented by free-

dom, could not long miſcarry. But even though the Trade ſhould not be relinquiſhed by others, if Juſtice required it's Abolition, how could We heſitate as to our own part?

Some Gentlemen had ſaid, that the Trade was conducted on principles of Humanity. Truly it was a new ſpecies of Humanity! We reſcued them, from what we were pleaſed to call, their wretched ſituation at home, and then we took credit for our Humanity, becauſe, after killing one half of them in the Seaſoning, we ſubſtitute, as we ſay, a better treatment in the Colonies than that to which they were liable at home!

It had been ſtated, that the principle of war, among Savages, was a general maſſacre. This, Mr. Courtenay declared, was not the fact, as would appear from the accounts of travellers. On the contrary, they even frequently adopted the Captives into their own families; and, ſo far from maſſacring the women and children, gave them the protection which the weakneſs of ſex or age demanded. There could be no doubt that the practice of Kidnapping prevailed; and, as to the convictions for Adultery and Witchcraft, which were one alledged cauſe of Slavery, he remarked, that every man being allowed ſix wives, there could be no great inducement to the crime of Adultery. As to Witchcraft, he obſerved, that this had been made a crime, in the reign of James the Firſt, in this country, for the purpoſe of informations; and how much more likely was this to be the caſe in Africa, under the encouragement, to ſuch convictions, afforded by the Slave-Trade? And, he remarked, that, if the Slave-Trade was ſanctioned, as had been ſaid, by twenty ſix acts of Parliament, he did not doubt fifty ſix acts might be found, by which Parliament had given it's ſanction to Witchcraft.

It had been ſaid, that the pulpit had been uſed as an inſtrument of attack on the Slave-Trade. He was happy to learn it had been ſo well employed; but he rather doubted of this fact, as he believed, ſome of the Clergy had obtained preferment, for inculcating the doctrine, that the Negroes were predeſtinated to Slavery. Yet he could not doubt, when the Bill went to the Lords, that the Biſhops would riſe up, with that brave and

virtuous indignation which became them, to aboliſh a traffic ſo contrary to all the principles of Humanity, Juſtice and Religion.

Mr. Courtenay concluded his Speech, by entreating every Gentleman to recollect, that, on his vote, that night, depended the happineſs of millions, and that it was now in his power to promote a meaſure, of which the benefits would be felt, over one whole quarter of the Globe; that the ſeeds of civilization might, by the propoſed Bill, be ſown all over Africa; and the firſt principles of Humanity be eſtabliſhed in regions where they had hitherto not been ſuffered to prevail.

Sir William Young ſpoke a few words in explanation.

Lord Carysfort ſaid, that if he had entertained any doubts on the preſent queſtion, they would have been removed entitely by the very able arguments uſed at the introduction of it; though, if poſſible, he was convinced ſtill more by the manner in which it had been oppoſed; no one argument, of ſolid weight, having, in his opinion, been adduced againſt it. His Lordſhip ſpoke of the inadequacy of the Colonial Laws for the protection of the Slaves, and the ſeverity of their puniſhments. They were ordered to receive thirty-nine laſhes, from a cart-whip, for the ordinary offences: but how dreadfully ſevere and diſproportionate was this puniſhment? They were deprived of the right of ſelf-defence againſt *any* white man; and the ſyſtem, in the Weſt Indies, was totally repugnant to the principles of our conſtitution.

The meaſure had policy on it's ſide; for the true intereſt of every nation conſiſted in adhering to Juſtice: and, though other countries ſhould retain the trade, yet, *founded, as it was, in falſe policy and complete injuſtice*, there could be no cauſe to regret our relinquiſhing it to other hands.

Col. Phipps

Col. PHIPPS roſe, and, the Houſe having become rather impatient for the queſtion, he mentioned the declaration he had made the preceding evening, when the queſtion of adjournment was under conſideration. He truſted, That the Houſe would allow him to ſtate the difficulties he felt in agreeing to the Preſent Motion, aſſuring them, in return, that he would endeavour to compreſs his ſentiments as much as poſſible.

It had been aſſerted, that this was a queſtion in which the Rights of Humanity, and the Laws of Nature were concerned. He could not agree to conſider it in that light; nor did he think that thoſe perſons who had formed their opinions on the ſame ground with himſelf, were at all deſerving of the harſh expreſſions, uſed the preceding evening. Sure he was, that he was not leſs ſenſible to feelings for the reſt of mankind, than any other Honourable Gentleman.

Col. Phipps then deſcribed the nature of the Governments of Africa, from whence the Negroes, who were the objects of the Slave-Trade, were originally procured. The African Governments, he ſaid, were not like thoſe of Europe: they were neither limited Monarchies, Ariſtocracies, nor Democracies. They were founded in abſolute Deſpotiſm, and every ſubject was an actual Slave. The great men of the country were Slaves to the Governor, their dependents were Slaves to thoſe great men, and ſo on, downwards. All their cuſtoms, in like manner, were different from thoſe of other countries. The priſoners of war too were ſubject to Slavery, and, ſuch being the caſe, he ſaw no more cruelty in diſpoſing of them to our merchants, than to thoſe of any other nation. The life of any ſubject of another prince, was forfeitable, if he were taken captive in war. Criminals alſo, in caſes of adultery and witchcraft, were ſubject to Slavery in Africa.

He obſerved, that it had been ſaid, in debate, that there were no laws in the Weſt Indies for the protection of the Slaves. He begged leave to deny the fact. There were ſeveral laws in being in the Colonies, though he was ready to admit, that farther regulations were neceſſary, and, he was ready to go, in this reſpect, as far as ever Humanity might require. He had paſſed

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ten months in Jamaica, where, he declared, he never had ſeen any ſuch acts of cruelty as were now talked of. Such ſeverities as he had ſeen, had not been exerciſed by Planters, or Maſters, or Overſeers, or any other Whites; but all the cruelties, he had obſerved, were committed by the Blacks. The dreadful ſtories that had been read and recited to the Committee, no more ought to fix a general ſtigma on the Planters, than the ſtory of Mrs. Brownrigg, which had been mentioned, in the courſe of the debate, ought to ſtamp this poliſhed Metropolis with the general brand of murder. There was once a haberdaſher's wife (Mrs. Nairne) who locked up her apprentice girl, and ſtarved her to death; but did ever any body think of aboliſhing haberdaſhery on this account? and he really thought this nearly a parallel caſe. He ſaid, he was perſuaded, the Negroes in the Weſt Indies were, in general, chearful and happy. They were fond of ornaments; and he appealed to the obſervation of every Gentleman, Whether it was the characteriſtic of miſerable perſons to ſhow a fondneſs for finery? On the contrary, he aſked, if it did not imply a chearful, contented mind, when people were deſirous of decorating the body.

If, as he truſted would be the caſe, the Honourable Gentleman ſhould loſe his Motion, he was ſure his humanity need not be at an end; for it would induce him to employ himſelf in deviſing means of providing, as comfortably as poſſible, for the accommodation of the Negroes, by ſome provident regulations. After an apology to his Honourable Friend, for differing in opinion from him, Col. Phipps concluded with declaring he ſhould give his negative to the Motion.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER roſe, and began his ſpeech by declaring, that, from the firſt hour of his having had the honour to ſit in Parliament, down to the preſent, among all the queſtions, whether political or perſonal, in which it had been his fortune to take a ſhare, there had never been one in which his heart was ſo deeply intereſted as the preſent: both on account of the ſerious principles it involved, and the important conſequences connected with it. He obſerved, that however forcibly

forcibly he might appeal to the natural and unerring feelings of every man upon this ſubject, and however ſtrong an argument he might, therefore, draw, even from this conſideration, yet this was not the ground on which he was about to reſt the determination of the preſent queſtion.

The preſent was not a mere queſtion of feeling; it was not for the ſake of exerciſing humanity (as had been often falſely imagined) that the Abolition of the Trade in Slaves was preſſed upon the Committee: but it was quite another principle, that ought, in his opinion, to determine their minds—The main argument inſiſted on was, THAT THE SLAVE-TRADE WAS FOUNDED IN INJUSTICE; *And it is, therefore,* ſaid Mr. Pitt, *ſuch a Trade, as it is impoſſible for me to ſupport, unleſs Gentlemen will, in the firſt place, prove to me, that there are no laws of Morality binding upon Nations, and that it is no duty of a Legiſlature to reſtrain it's ſubjects from invading the happineſs of other Countries, and from violating the fundamental principles of Juſtice.*

He obſerved, that many Gentlemen, however, who oppoſed the Motion, had brought forward, on the preſent occaſion, a plea of impracticability. Several of them had even expreſſed a deſire to ſee the Slave-Trade aboliſhed, if it were not for ſome neceſſity for continuing it, which they conceived to exiſt—Nay, almoſt every one, he believed, and in particular an Honourable Baronet (Sir W. Young) and another Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Stanley, Agent for the Iſlands) appeared to wiſh, that the farther Importation of Slaves might ceaſe, provided it could be made out, That the population of the Weſt Indies could be, by any means, maintained without it.

Mr. Pitt ſaid, that he propoſed, therefore, with the permiſſion of the Houſe, to apply himſelf particularly to this ſubject; for as this appeared to operate, in the minds of ſo many Gentlemen, as the chief objection, he truſted, that, by ſhowing this argument to be groundleſs, and the whole idea of impracticability, as it was now urged, to be entirely a miſconception, he ſhould be able thus to clear away every obſtacle whatever; ſo that, having no ground either of juſtice or neceſſity, to ſtand upon, there could be no excuſe or pretence left to the Committee, for reſiſting the preſent Motion.

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He might reaſonably hope, however, that Gentlemen, even upon their own grounds, would not reckon any diſadvantage to the plantations, that was merely *ſmall* and *temporary*, to be a ſufficient reaſon to warrant the continuance of the Slave-Trade.—It was ſurely not any *ſlight* degree of expediency, any *ſmall balance of profit or any light ſhades of probability, on the one ſide, rather than the other*, that would determine any Gentleman in the preſent queſtion. He aſked pardon even for the ſuppoſition. The Houſe, he was ſure, would not decide the queſtion, on ſuch grounds. The Slave-Trade was an evil of ſuch a magnitude, that there muſt be a common wiſh in the Committee at once to put an end to it, if there were no very great and ſerious obſtacle. Nothing ſhort, ſaid he, of the utmoſt danger, nay of ruin, to the Weſt India Iſlands, ought we to hear urged as a plea for continuing ſuch a trade as this! It was a Trade by which multitudes of unoffending Nations were deprived of the bleſſings of Civilization, and had their peace and happineſs invaded. It ought therefore to be no common expediency; it ought either to be ſome poſitive neceſſity, or, at leaſt, ſomething very like neceſſity, that it became thoſe Gentlemen to plead, who took upon them to defend the continuance of this Trade.

He knew the Weſt Indian Gentlemen had uſed very ſtrong language, on this part of the ſubject, and had expreſſed an alarm for the Iſlands that was very ſerious indeed. It would be proper, however, for the Committee to conſider this for themſelves; for he could not help thinking, there was an over great degree of ſenſibility, among thoſe Gentlemen, on this particular point, and that their alarm, as he hoped to prove, was excited in a way which the occaſion by no means juſtified. He had endeavoured carefully and impartially to examine into this himſelf, and he would now proceed to lay thoſe reaſons before the Houſe, which induced him firmly to believe, not only that no permanent miſchief would follow from the Abolition, but not even any ſuch temporary hurt or inconvenience as could be ſtated to be a reaſon for preventing the Houſe from agreeing to the queſtion before them: on the contrary, that the Abolition

tion itſelf would lay the foundation for the more ſolid improvement of all the various intereſts of thoſe colonies.

In proceeding upon this ſubject, he ſhould apply his obſervations chiefly to Jamaica, which contained more than half the Slaves in the whole Weſt Indies, and, if he ſhould ſucceed in proving that no material detriment could ariſe to the population of that Iſland, this would be ſo conſiderable a part of the queſtion, and would afford ſo ſtrong a preſumption with reſpect to the other Iſlands (it being a tolerably fair ſample of the whole) that the Houſe could not any longer heſitate whether they ſhould or ſhould not put a ſtop to this moſt horrid Trade.

In the twenty years, ending in 1788, the annual loſs of Slaves in Jamaica (that is, the exceſs of deaths above the births) appeared to be one in one hundred; in a preceding period, the loſs was greater, and, in a period before that, greater ſtill, there having been a continual gradation in the decreaſe through the whole time, as appeared from an accurate examination of the particular years in each period. It might fairly be concluded, therefore, that (the *average* loſs of the laſt period being one *per cent.*) the loſs in the *former* part of it would be ſomewhat *more*, and in the *latter* part ſomewhat *leſs* than one *per cent*; inſomuch that it might be fairly queſtioned, whether, by this time, the births and deaths in Jamaica might not be ſtated as very nearly equal. It was to be added, that a peculiar calamity, which ſwept away 15,000 perſons, had occaſioned a part of the mortality in the laſt mentioned period; the check to the proviſion trade, occaſioned by the independence of America, had alſo been urged, by the Weſt India Gentlemen, as a cauſe of more than common depopulation, in the ſame time: whether this had really operated to ſo great an extent as had been ſtated, he could not exactly ſay, but he was clear that this alſo was an evil that might not be expected to return; as a very conſiderable culture of proviſions in the Iſlands, had now happily taken place. It was plain, then, even on theſe grounds only, nay, even if the apparent loſs had been, as ſome ſtatements made it, more than one *per cent*, the

probable loſs, now to be expected, muſt be very inconſiderable indeed.

There was, however, one circumſtance to be added, which the Weſt India Gentlemen, in ſtating this matter, had entirely overlooked, and which was ſo material, as clearly to reduce the probable diminution in the population of Jamaica down to nothing, ſuppoſing even that all the obſervations he had juſt been making were entirely to fail him. The circumſtance he meant was this: In all the calculations he had referred to, of the comparative number of births and deaths, *all* the Negroes in the Iſland were included; thoſe newly imported Negroes who died in conſequence of the ſeaſoning, made a part; and ſwelled, therefore, very materially, the number of the deaths; but as theſe extraordinary deaths would ceaſe, as ſoon as the importation ceaſed, there ought to be a deduction of them made from his preſent calculation.

Now this number would make up, of itſelf, nearly the whole of that one *per cent.* which had been ſtated, laying aſide all the other conſiderations. He particularly preſſed Gentlemen's attention to this circumſtance; for it was undoubtedly the fact, that the complaint of being likely to want hands in Jamaica, aroſe from the miſtake of including the *preſent, unnatural* deaths cauſed by the ſeaſoning among the *natural and perpetual* cauſes of mortality. Theſe deaths, being erroneouſly taken into the Planters' calculations, gave occaſion to the idea that the numbers could not be kept up. Theſe deaths, which were cauſed merely by the Slave-Trade, furniſhed the very ground, therefore, on which the continuance of the Slave-Trade was thought neceſſary, became the very reaſon for bringing over more of theſe wretched Negroes, and for thus adding to this very ſource of the mortality.

The evidence before the Houſe, as to this point, was perfectly clear; for it would be found in that dreadful catalogue of deaths, in conſequence of the Seaſoning, and the Middle Paſſage, which the Houſe had been condemned to look into, that *one half* die. An annual mortality of 2,000 in Jamaica might be charged, therefore, to the Importation, which compared

pared with the whole numbers on the Iſland, hardly fell ſhort of the whole one *per cent* decreaſe.

Joining this with all the other conſiderations, Mr. Pitt then pointedly aſked, *Can* the decreaſe of Slaves in Jamaica be ſuch —Can the Colonies be ſo deſtitute of means—ſo incapable of thoſe improvements which a more prudent management, and a ſpirit of benevolence muſt naturally furniſh—Can they, at a time when they tell you of uew regulations, to benefit the Slaves, which, they ſay, are eſtabliſhing every day—Can they, under all theſe circumſtances, be permitted to plead that total impoſſibility of keeping up their number, which they have reſted on, as being indeed the only poſſible pretext for allowing freſh importations from Africa? He appealed, therefore, to the ſober judgment of every Gentleman in the Houſe, Whether an intereſt on the part of Jamaica, ſuch as he had deſcribed, could form an objection, or juſtify a heſitation, in agreeing to the preſent Motion.

It might be obſerved alſo, that, when the Importation ſhould ſtop, that diſproportion between the ſexes, which was one of the obſtacles to population, would gradually diminiſh, and indeed our whole Colonies in the Weſt Indies would revert to that natural order and courſe of things by which population and civilization are promoted. Through the want of this natural order, a thouſand grievances were created, which it was impoſſible to define, and which it was in vain to think that, under ſuch circumſtances, we could cure. He was convinced the Abolition itſelf would work this effect. The Weſt Indians would then feel a near and urgent intereſt, to enter into a thouſand little details which it was impoſſible for him to deſcribe, but which have the greateſt influence on population. A foundation would thus be laid for the general welfare of the Iſlands, a new ſyitem would riſe up the reverſe of the old, and eventually both their general wealth and general happineſs would increaſe.

This, however, it ſhould be remembered, was proving far more than he was bound to, with a view to the preſent queſtion; for Gentlemen muſt feel, that if even he could prove the Abolition *not ruinous*, it would be enough. He could give up, there-

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fore, three arguments out of four, through the whole that he had ſaid, and yet have enough left to eſtabliſh his poſition. As to the Creoles, it was a plain point that they would increaſe; they differed in this intirely from the imported Slaves, who were both a burthen and a curſe to themſelves and others. The meaſure now propoſed would operate like a charm, and beſides ſtopping all the miſeries we give occaſion to in Africa and the Middle Paſſage, would produce even more benefits in the Weſt Indies than legal regulations could do.

One thing he muſt touch upon, which was rather a delicate point; the queſtion of emancipating the Slaves in the Weſt Indies. A raſh emancipation he was clear would be wrong and miſchievous: In that unhappy ſituation to which *our baneful conduct had brought both ourſelves and them*, it would be no juſtice on either ſide to give them liberty. They were as yet incapable of it, but gradually their ſituation might be mended. They might be relieved from every thing harſh and ſevere, raiſed from their preſent degradation, and put under the proper protection of law: *till then, to talk of Emancipation was inſanity.* But it was the ſyſtem of freſh importations that interfered with theſe principles of improvement, and it was the Abolition of the Slave-Trade that would furniſh the means of effectually regulating the ſituation of the Slaves in the Iſlands. This was not a warm idea taken up without due reaſoning and reflection, but had it's foundation in human nature: Wherever there was the incentive of honour, credit and fair profit, *there* induſtry would be; and when theſe labourers ſhould have the natural ſprings of human action afforded them, they would then riſe to the natural level of human induſtry; but when degraded into mere machines, they would not even afford you all the benefit of machines, but became more unprofitable, and every way more diſadvantageous, than any other inſtrument of labour whatſoever.

Mr. Pitt then proceeded to ſome ſhort obſervations on each of the other Iſlands, as there were ſome circumſtances of difference between them. In Barbadoes there had been no decreaſe that need alarm us; on the contrary, the Slaves in that Iſland ſeemed rather to increaſe. In St. Kitt's, the decreaſe for 14 years had been but 3-4ths per cent. and here many of the

ſame obſervations would apply, as he had been uſing in the caſe of Jamaica. In Antigua, a conſiderable number had died by a particular calamity; but for this, the decreaſe would have been really trifling. In Nevis and Montſerrat there was this ſtrong and moſt favourable circumſtance, that there was little or no diſproportion of ſexes, and it might well be hoped the numbers would be kept up. In Dominica, ſome controverſy had ariſen about the calculation; but he had to obſerve, that Governor Orde mentions there is an increaſe of births above the deaths. From Grenada and St. Vincent's, no good accounts had been tranſmitted, in anſwer to the queries ſent them; but they were probably not in circumſtances leſs favourable than the other Iſlands, though perhaps it might be found, that perſons who had proceeded on recent grants might be entitled to our conſideration; but whether their caſe was ſeparated from the others or not, it never could be argued that they ought to ſtand in the way of the great object before the Houſe.

On a full review of the probable ſtate of the Negro population in our Weſt India Iſlands, was there then, ſaid Mr. Pitt, any ſerious ground of alarm from the meaſure of aboliſhing the Slave-Trade, of aboliſhing it entirely and immediately? and was there any of that Impracticability to be pleaded, on which alone ſo many Gentlemen had reſted all their objections? Muſt we not *bluſh* at pretending it would *diſtreſs our conſciences* to aboliſh this moſt horrid Trade, on account of the alarming conſequences to the population of the Iſlands?

Intolerable were the miſchiefs of this Trade, both in it's origin, and through every ſtage of it's progreſs. The Honourable Gentleman near him (Colonel Phipps) had been deſcribing Africa as a Continent half cultivated. In ſuch a country, in order to promote this Trade, you muſt apply yourſelves to the avarice and to the worſt paſſions of the Princes. To ſay that Slaves can be furniſhed us by fair and commercial means, was abſurd and ridiculous. The Trade ſometimes ceaſed, as during the laſt war, ſometimes the demand increaſed, ſometimes it was declining, according to our circumſtances. But how was it poſſible that, to a demand ſo extremely fluctuating, the ſupply of Slaves ſhould always exactly accommodate itſelf?

itſelf? *Alas! alas!* ſaid Mr. Pitt, we make human beings the ſubjects of commerce; we learn to talk of them as ſuch; yet we will not allow to them the common principle of commerce, *that the Supply muſt accommodate itſelf to the Conſumption* It was not from wars then that the Slaves were chiefly furniſhed. They were obtained in proportion as they were wanted. If a *Demand* for Slaves aroſe, a *Supply* was forced in one way or other, and it was in vain, overpowered as we now were with poſitive evidence, as well as the reaſonableneſs of the ſuppoſition, to deny, that, by the Slave-Trade, we were the cauſes of thoſe dreadful enormities in that unhappy continent. It was plain, if we conſidered the number annually carried off, that no regular or ordinary means could furniſh ſo many captives.

It was ſaid by an Hon. Baronet (Sir W. Young) that if we did not take them, they would be deſtroyed; but this he did not believe, becauſe he did not find, from all his reading, that the deſtruction of their captives was the common practice, as had been ſtated, of all uncivilized nations. We aſſumed, therefore, what was falſe; the very ſelling them implied this; for if they would *ſell their captives* for *profit*, why ſhould they not *employ them in any labour that would yield a profit*, for the ſame reaſon? Nay, many of them, while there was no demand from the Slave Merchants, were often actually ſo employed. The wealth of the richer people in Africa was reckoned to conſiſt in Slaves, and how could we ſuppoſe they would be ſo abſurd, then, as to deſtroy them? Beſides, the Trade *had* been ſuſpended during the war, and it was never ſaid, or thought, that any ſuch conſequence had then followed. But even if, inſtead of the preſent pitileſs tranſportations, ſome few lives ſhould be actually deſtroyed; if at the firſt they, with the guilt on *their* heads, ſhould put ſome few priſoners to death, it was clear, in his opinion, that we ought not to make this any reaſon for perſiſting in the Trade. The duration of this evil that was dreaded would be ſhort; by degrees the intereſt of Humanity would work it's own way, if our perverted ſyſtem did not obſtruct it's courſe.

It had been argued, by the Hon. Baronet, that the ſelling men for Witchcraft was no conſequence of the Slave-Trade,

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for that Witchcraft commonly implied poiſon, and was a real puniſhable crime. But was it recollected, that in the caſe of Witchcraft or poiſon, it was not the individual only, but *man, woman and child*, every connection and relation of the guilty perſon, that were ſold for Slaves, which principle of injuſtice and cruelty was promoted moſt undoubtedly by the Slave-Trade? The truth was, that we ſtopt the natural progreſs of civilization; we cut off Africa from the opportunity of improvement, we kept down that continent in a ſtate of *Darkneſs, Bondage, Ignorance, and Blood.* Was not this an awful conſideration for this country? Look on the Map of Africa; how little uſeful intercourſe had been eſtabliſhed in that vaſt Continent? While other Countries were aſſiſting and enlightening each other, *that* alone had none of theſe benefits? We had obtained as yet only juſt ſo much knowledge of it's productions, as to ſhow that there is a capacity for Trade, which we check. Indeed, if the miſchiefs in Africa were out of the queſtion, *the circumſtances of the Middle Paſſage alone* would, in his mind, be reaſon enough for the Abolition. Such a ſcene as that of the Slave-ſhips, paſſing over with their wretched cargoes to the Weſt Indies, if it could be ſpread before the eyes of the Houſe, would be ſufficient of itſelf to make them vote at once for this queſtion. And when it can be added alſo, that the intereſt even of the Weſt Indies themſelves, reſts on the Abolition of this Trade, Mr. Pitt ſaid, he could not conceive an act of more indiſpenſible duty than that which was now propoſed to the Houſe. If even the conſequences had appeared to him widely different from what they did appear, ſtill he ſhould inſiſt that the Houſe ought to give the ſame vote. What an aggravation then of guilt would it be, if the Policy, inſtead of being againſt the meaſure, was alſo for it? A more imperious Duty than that of aboliſhing the Slave-Trade, he believed was never exerciſed in the Parliament of Great Britain.

Sir ARCHIBALD EDMONDSTONE deſired to know, before the queſtion was put, what was the exact purport of it; and whether it went ſo far as to pledge thoſe who voted for it, to a total and immediate Abolition of the Slave-Trade.

Mr.

Mr. Alderman WATSON pleaded the ſituation in which he ſtood, in his capacity of Repreſentative, as a reaſon that would induce the Houſe to indulge him with a few moments of their time.

The Houſe having become more ſilent, he proceeded into an argument to ſhow that this Trade was not liable to the objections urged againſt it. He defended it as highly beneficial to the country, being one material branch of it's commerce. He ſaid that he could not think of the African Trade without connecting, in his mind, the Weſt India Trade with it; for that, in truth, the one hung upon the other. Nor was this all: a third important branch of our commerce entered alſo, in the ſame manner, into his conſideration, which was the Newfoundland-fiſhery; and he went into a detail which he concluded by obſerving, that this moſt valuable Fiſhery could not anſwer to this country, if it were not for the vaſt quantity of the inferior fiſh bought up for the Negroes in the Weſt Indies, and which was quite unfit for any other market. He ſpoke of the mutual dependence, that each of theſe three Trades had on the other, and of the great importance, in a commercial point of view, of not interfering with the one, leſt we ſhould endanger the exiſtence of the others.

He referred alſo to what had paſſed in the National Aſſembly, on the ſubject of the Slave-Trade, and read part of a Speech of M. Turgot, recommending a gradual Abolition of it, and not one that was, by any means, immediate.

The Alderman recommended it to the Houſe, to follow the ſame principles, and to ſoften the rigours of Slavery, by wholſome regulations; but not to adopt ſo raſh a conduct as to vote the immediate Abolition of the Trade in Slaves.

Mr. FOX began his ſpeech by ſaying, that, at ſo late an hour, it might be ſome ſatisfaction to the Houſe to be aſſured, that he ſhould not trouble them very long; for the queſtion did not need

need to be viewed in any great variety of lights, though it was undoubtedly one of the greateſt importance.

He obſerved, that ſome expreſſions, which he had uſed on the preceeding day, had been complained of, as too harſh and ſevere. He had now had four and twenty hours to reflect on his words, he had revolved them over and over again in his mind, but he could not prevail on himſelf to retract them; becauſe, the more he conſidered and knew of the ſubject in diſcuſſion, the more did he believe, that if, after reading all the evidence on the table, and attending to the debate, any Gentleman could continue to oppoſe the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, and could thus avow himſelf, after a full knowledge of the ſubject, an Abettor of this ſhameful traffic in Human Fleſh, it could only be either from ſome *hardneſs of heart*, or ſome ſuch *difficulty of underſtanding* as he really knew not how to account for.

Some Gentlemen, Mr. Fox obſerved, had conſidered this queſtion, as a queſtion of Political Freedom; whereas it was no ſuch thing. No man would ſuſpect him of being an enemy to political freedom; his ſentiments were too well known to leave him ſubject to ſuch a ſuſpicion. But this was a queſtion not of *Political*, but of *Perſonal* freedom. Political freedom was undoubtedly as great a bleſſing as any people under Heaven (conſidered collectively as a people) could pant after, or ſeek to poſſeſs; but political freedom, when it came to be compared with perſonal freedom, ſunk to nothing, and became no bleſſing at all in compariſon. To confonnd theſe two, ſerved, therefore, only to render all argument on either, perplexing and unintelligible. It was perſonal freedom that was now the point in queſtion. Perſonal freedom muſt be the firſt object of every human being, and it was a right, of which he who deprives a fellow-creature, is *abſolutely criminal* in ſo depriving him; and which he who withholds, when it is in his power to reſtore it, is no leſs criminal in withholding. Mr. Fox therefore declared, that, though he profeſſed great regard for an Honourable Friend who had complained of his words, and for a noble Lord who ſat near him (Lord John Ruſſel) yet un-

leſs they endeavoured, zealouſly and ſincerely, to put an end to ſo horrid a violation of perſonal freedom, as the African Slave-Trade moſt undoubtedly was, however it might hurt thoſe for whom he felt an affection and reſpect, yet he could not ſo far compliment them as to retract his words, or to neglect ſpeaking in the manner which his duty required, upon a ſubject ſo ſerious as the preſent.

The Houſe being now apprized of the nature of this Trade, having received evidence, having had the facts undeniably eſtabliſhed, knowing, in ſhort, *what the Slave-Trade was*, he declared, that if they did not, by the vote of that night, mark to all mankind their abhorrence of a practice ſo enormous, ſo ſavage, ſo repugnant to all laws, human and divine, it would be more ſcandalous, and more defaming, in the eyes of the country, and of the world, than any vote which any Houſe of Commons had ever given. He deſired them ſeriouſly to reflect, before they gave their Votes, what they were about to do that evening. If they voted that the Slave-Trade ſhould not be aboliſhed, *they would, by their Vote that night, give a Parliamentary Sanction to Rapine, Robbery, and Murder*; for a ſyſtem of rapine, robbery, and murder, the Slave-Trade had now moſt clearly been proved to be.

After an exordium to this effect, Mr. Fox ſaid, that every Gentleman who had peruſed the examination of the witneſſes, upon the table, muſt acknowledge, that he had not uſed one word too ſtrong. He had read the Privy Council's Report ſome time ago; but owned it was but lately that he had turned his attention to the evidence ſince taken before the Select Committee; and he regretted that he had not done it ſooner; for the facts he there found were ſuch as proved the abſolute neceſſity, on every conſideration of morality and juſtice, of putting an end to a practice, ſo pregnant with circumſtances of terror and alarm to this country.

That the pretence of danger to our Weſt India Iſlands, from he Abolition, was totally unfounded, Mr. Fox ſaid, the ſpeech of the Honourable Gentleman who introduced the Motion had fully convinced him, but, if it had not, the ſpeech of the Right Honourable The Chancellor of the Exchequer, by which he had

had, in ſo maſterly a manner, eſtabliſhed that point, muſt have given him complete ſatisfaction. If there was any thing for him at all to find fault with, in the Right Honourable Gentleman's ſpeech, he ſhould ſay, that it could only be his dwelling ſo much on that part of the ſubject, and beſtowing ſo much eloquence and ability on it; ſo as to give an air of more importance to the pretexts of the other ſide, than they at all deſerved; thus drawing the Committee's attention from the *Juſtice* of the queſtion, which was a thing of infinitely greater magnitude.

It had been ſhown, on a compariſon of the deaths and births in Jamaica, that there was not now any decreaſe; but if there had been, it would have made no difference in his conduct on the ſubject: for had the mortality been ever ſo great, he ſhould have aſcribed it entirely to the ſyſtem of importing Negroes, inſtead of encouraging the breed. If any man were to tell him of a country in which, though horſes were uſed, yet very few were bred, this would not induce him to ſuppoſe, there was any unfriendlineſs, in the climate of that country, to the natural propagation of horſes, but merely to it's being found, or thought cheaper by the inhabitants, to buy horſes than to breed them. It was not his fault, Mr. Fox ſaid, that he was reduced to the degrading neceſſity of ſpeaking of human beings, as if they were horſes.

But what he urged in the caſe of horſes, was evidently the caſe with Slaves in the Weſt Indies. The climate was declared to be remarkably congenial to them, and to be juſt like their own. This had been actually pleaded (with a different view indeed) in favour of the Slave Trade—then why ſhould they not breed? It was merely becauſe the Weſt India Planters thought it more convenient, more agreeable to them, or more cheap, to buy them fit for work than to breed them—it was becauſe the Planters did not chuſe to treat them with that attention and humanity which would enſure their breeding. What then was the purpoſe for which this accurſed and horrid Trade in human creatures was deſired to be kept up? The purpoſe was this—in order to give the Planters the opportunity of deſtroying the Negroes on their eſtates, as faſt as they pleaſed.

The plea on which the Slave-Trade to Africa was to be kept up (if the mortality in the Iſlands was the plea) could only be in order to indulge the Planters in the liberty of miſuſing their Slaves, ſo as to check propagation; for it was from ill uſage only that, in a climate ſo natural to them and ſo favourable, their numbers could ever diminiſh. Mr. Fox ſtated, therefore, that if the mortality in the Weſt Indies, were ten times greater than it was, this would only be a ten times ſtronger reaſon for forbidding the importation of Slaves. It would only argue ten times more ill uſage than now prevailed, and Parliament would be ſo much the more loudly called upon to put an end to a ſyſtem ſo deſtructive of human life.

The very ground, therefore, on which the Planters reſted the neceſſity of freſh importations, namely, the deſtruction of lives in the Weſt Indies, was itſelf the ſtrongeſt reaſon that could poſſibly be given, for the Abolition of the Trade, and, the more ſtrongly they choſe to urge it, the more ſtrongly ſhould he argue from it the neceſſity of the preſent meaſure, and the ſerious need there was of a parliamentary interference. He obſerved alſo, that, if any thing could aggravate the national guilt of the Slave-Trade on the Coaſt of Africa, it was this ſame dreadful argument of it's being neceſſary in order to replace the lives deſtroyed by our inhuman ſyſtem of treating them in the Weſt Indies.

After very pointedly remarking on the nature of this, which was the main defence ſet up on the part of the Weſt Indies, Mr. Fox adverted to ſome of the inſtances of cruelty which had been mentioned, and which appeared in actual evidence. He thought that an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Smith) who had ſpoken with much ſound argument and manly ſenſe, had done well to introduce thoſe ſtories, which had made ſuch an impreſſion on the Houſe, that they could ſcarcely bear to be preſent when ſuch horrid tales were even related. But had the truth of any one of them been controverted? An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Cawthorne) by way of diſcrediting the accounts given of the African Captain's cruelty to the child of ten months old, could only ſay that it was too bad to be true, and that it was impoſſible: and, in order to diſcredit the witneſs,

neſs, had bid you look to his croſs examination. The Honourable Gentleman, however, had declined turning to the croſs examination, the whole of which, Mr. Fox deſired the Houſe to obſerve, amounted to this: that when preſſed, in the cloſeſt and ſtricteſt manner, by ſome able Members of the Houſe, the only inconſiſtency they could fix upon him, was a doubt whether the fact had happened on the ſame day, of the ſame month, of the year 1764, or the year 1765.

He obſerved, that abſolute power was not denied to be exerciſed by the Slave Captains, and, if this was granted, ſuch was human nature, that he was perſuaded all the cruelties charged upon them would naturally follow. He alſo remarked, that nothing leſs than complete arbitrary power, was exerciſed over the Slaves in the Weſt Indies, and he ſpoke of the abuſe of it, which there, as well as every where elſe, *muſt* be the conſequence. Never did he hear of any charges exhibited againſt any ſet of men, before any Court or Legiſlature, of ſo black and horrible a nature, as thoſe contained in the evidence now on the table; and it became thoſe who laboured under them, to come forward and vindicate their characters to their country.

Many, in ſhort, were the inſtances of cruelty to which this Trade gave riſe; it was a ſcene of ſuch iniquity and oppreſſion, in every one of it's ſtages, that if the Houſe, with all their preſent knowledge of the circumſtances, ſhould *dare* to vote for it's continuance, they muſt have nerves of which he had no conception. We might find inſtances indeed in ancient hiſtory, of men's violating all the feelings of Nature in ſome caſes of an extraordinary kind. Fathers, ſaid he, have ſacrificed their ſons and daughters, or huſbands their wives; but if we are to do violence to the feelings of humanity, and in this reſpect, to imitate their characters, we ought not only to have nerves as firm and ſtrong as the two Brutuſes; but we ought alſo to take care that we have a *cauſe as good*, and that we have motives for ſuch a dereliction of our feelings, as patriotic and public ſpirited as they had.

But what was our motive?—this Trade, that was ſo contended for, this wholeſale ſacrifice of a whole order and race

of

of our fellow creatures, which, in violence to all our feelings, we are aſked to vote the continuance of? *It was a traffic for human beings, who were to be carried away by force, from their native country, in order to be ſubjected to the mere will and caprice, the tyranny and oppreſſion of other human beings, for their whole natural lives, they and their poſterity for ever!!*

Mr. Fox then entered into ſome account of the Trade, tracing it from its firſt ſcenes in Africa, through the Middle Paſſage, to it's concluſion. It was impoſſible, he ſaid, to conſider it in the light of any natural or ordinary commerce. We might, if we pleaſed, give it the name of a Trade; but it had none of the principles of Trade belonging to it. It was even on the firſt view obvious, that there could not be a multitude of human beings, at all times, ready to be furniſhed, in the way of fair articles of commerce, juſt as our occaſions might require. The argument urged by the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon this head, was perfectly unanſwerable. Our *demand was fluctuating*, it entirely ceaſed at ſome times, nay, for whole years together, as was the caſe during the laſt war; ſometimes again a demand for Slaves was great and preſſing. How then was it poſſible, on every ſudden call, to furniſh a ſufficient return in Slaves, without reſorting to thoſe means of obtaining them which had been mentioned, and the very mention of which was ſufficient to ſtrike us with horror? He obſerved there had been three means ſtated, of procuring Slaves; namely, thoſe of War, Trade, and Crimes ſuppoſed to be committed, each of which he would now a little examine the juſtice of.

Captives in war, it was urged, were in uncivilized countries, commonly doomed to Slavery. This, however, was falſe in point of fact; and it was ſo far from being the caſe in Europe, that it was become a cuſtom (founded on the wiſeſt policy) to pay the captives a peculiar reſpect and civility—Ought we not to inculcate the ſame principles in Africa? So far from it, we encouraged wars for the ſake of taking, not the man's goods and poſſeſſions, but the man himſelf, *and it was not the war that was the cauſe of the Slave-Trade, but the Slave-Trade that was the cauſe of the war.* The practice was, as appeared in evi-

dence,

dence, for the Slave Merchants to carry preſents, conſiſting commonly of ſpirits, to the African Kings, and when intoxicated with them, then it was that the *royal prerogative* of making war was exerciſed.—An inſtance was mentioned, in evidence, of an African Prince, who, when ſober, had reſiſted the wiſhes of the Slave Merchants; but, in the moment of inebriety, gave the word for war, attacked the next village, inhabited by his own ſubjects, carried them all off, and ſold them to the Slave Merchants.

After dwelling on the enormity of the ſyſtem of making war in Africa, which was one ſource of obtaining Slaves; he came next to the ſecond way—of Trade.—This he ſaid was proved, by the moſt undeniable evidence, to be little more or leſs than a moſt ſhameful and unreſtrained ſyſtem of Kidnapping. He referred the Houſe to various inſtances of this. He mentioned one caſe, when the Agent of the Merchants affected to act as Mediator between two contending parties, who, if he might uſe a pun on ſo melancholy an occaſion, certainly *brought the two parties together*, for he brought them tied back to back to one another, and hurried them both on board a ſlave-ſhip.—There was another inſtance of a conſiderable Black Slave Merchant, who, after having ſold a Girl whom he had kidnapped, was preſently after kidnapped and carried away himſelf; and when he aſked the African Captain, in his ſtrange language, "What, take me grand Trader too?" The only anſwer was, "Yes, we will take you, or her, or any one elſe, pro-"vided any body will ſell you to us." And accordingly both the Trader and the Child were carried off together, to the Weſt Indies.

Mr. Fox then adverted to the third mode of obtaining Slaves; by crimes committed, or ſuppoſed to be committed. This had been ſtated in ſuch a way, that one would think the Slave-Trade was kept up by us, on a ſort of friendly principle, and as a neceſſary part of the *Police* of that country. It was remarkable, that two of the chief crimes which produced convictions, were Adultery and Witchcraft. Was *Adultery* then a crime which we need go to *Africa* to puniſh? Was *this* the way we took to eſtabliſh the purity of our National Character? Where

marriage was ſolemnly inſtituted, as a religious rite, as it was in this civilized country, he ſhould be ſorry to ſpeak lightly of the crime of Adultery. But was *Africa* the place where *Engliſhmen*, above all men, ought to go in ſearch of Adulterers? Did it become us to uſe our Saviour's expreſſion, "*To caſt the firſt Stone?*" It was a moſt extraordinary Pilgrimage, for a moſt extraordinary purpoſe! And yet this was one of the chief crimes by which, in that uncivilized country, we juſtified our right of carrying off it's inhabitants into perpetual Slavery, in the Weſt Indies.—The next crime to this was the ſuppoſed one of Whitchcraft. We, ourſelves, more enlightened than they, were aware that the crime does not really exiſt; but, inſtead of humanely trying to diſpel their blindneſs and ignorance, we rather choſe, for the ſake of the Slave-Trade, to lend ourſelves to their ſuperſtition, and become the inſtruments of their blind vengeance. We ſtand by (ſaid Mr. Fox) we hear the trial, we know the crime to be impoſſible, and that the accuſed *muſt* be innocent; but we wait, in patient ſilence, for his condemnation, and then we lend our friendly aid to the *Police* of the Country, by buying the wretched Convict, *with all his family*, whom, for the benefit of Africa, we carry away alſo into perpetual Slavery.

Having ſpoken of the three ways of obtaining Slaves, Mr. Fox proceeded to the manner of their Tranſportation. He knew not how to give the Houſe a more correct idea of all the horrors of their ſituation, when on board, than by referring them to the ſection of a ſlave-ſhip, where the eye might ſee, what the tongue muſt fall ſhort in deſcribing. Here he enlarged on the effects of deſpotic power, in the caſe of Captains of ſlave-ſhips, and on the ſtrange inſtances of Cruelty, proved in evidence, to have been perpetrated.

They had been thought, by ſome perſons, to be ſo extravagant, that the term of Inſanity had been uſed; and indeed they were unaccountable, except on the principle that deſpotic power, by long uſe, is apt to produce acts of Cruelty, ſo enormous, that they have been known frequently to aſſume the appearance of Inſanity. Among European Sovereigns, indeed, the mild influence of Religion, Philoſophy, and the modern limitations

of

of Power, had rendered acts of Deſpotiſm and Cruelty, far from common; but, among the Emperors of Rome, how many were there who, by the unreſtrained uſe of their power, became ſo cruel as to be ſuſpected of occaſional Inſanity, juſt as many Maſters of ſlave-ſhips had been.——Who was there that ever read, in the Roman Hiſtory, the facts recorded of Nero, without ſuſpecting he was mad? Who would not be apt to impute Inſanity to that Monſter Caligula? Who would not think the ſame of Domitian? Who would heſitate to pronouce Caracalla inſane? Who could otherwiſe account for the vices of Commodus? Or who could doubt that Heliogabalus was out of his ſenſes. Here were ſix Roman Emperors, not connected in blood, or by deſcent, who each of them poſſeſſing uncontrolled power, had been ſo diſtinguiſhed for cruelty, that nothing ſhort of Inſanity could well be imputed to them. He then aſked, whether the Inſanity of the Maſters of ſlave-ſhips, might not be ſuſpected to be ſomething of the ſame ſpecies, and might not be accounted for upon much the ſame principles?

Mr. Fox then proceeded to the ſituation of the Slaves, when brought to the Weſt Indies. It had been ſaid indeed, that they were taken from a worſe ſtate, to a better. The Houſe, he knew, could not wiſh to hear recitals of Cruelty, nor did he like to dwell upon them. It was their duty, however, in the preſent caſe, to open their ears to them, and the Houſe (exclaimed Mr. Fox) *ſhall* hear them. An Honourable Gentleman before him (Mr. Smith) had quoted ſome inſtances, and he would now quote two more. The firſt was in a French Iſland; but was declared by witneſſes of unimpeachable credit. A Slave, under hard uſage, urged by the firſt impulſe of Nature, had run away, and attempted to get his liberty. To prevent his repeating the offence, the Planter ſent for his Surgeon, and ſaid to him, "Cut off this man's leg. The Surgeon, who had more Humanity than his Maſter, refuſed. "You refuſe (ſaid the Planter) then what you decline, as an act of friendſhip to me, I will compel you to do, as an act of duty." Upon this, the Planter *broke* the poor man's leg. "There now, ſaid he to the Surgeon, you *muſt* cut off his leg, or the man will die."—We might conſole ourſelves, perhaps, that this was in a French Iſland, but

in the Engliſh there was no great difference; and the next inſtance he ſhould ſtate was in an Iſland of our own. A Gentleman (Mr. Roſs, as appeared in evidence) while he was walking along, heard the ſhrieks of a female, iſſuing from a barn or outhouſe; and as they were much too violent to be excited by any ordinary puniſhment, he was prompted to go near, and ſee what could be the matter. On looking in, he perceived a young female, tied up to a beam by her wriſts, entirely naked, and in the act of involuntary writhing and ſwinging, while the author of her torture was ſtanding below her, with a lighted torch in his hand, which he applied to all the parts of her body, as it approached him. What crime this miſerable wretch had perpretrated, he knew not; but that was of little conſequence, as the human mind could not conceive a crime, in any degree, warranting ſuch a puniſhment.

By the manner in which the Houſe received this ſtory, Mr. Fox obſerved to them, that he ſaw the tale was ſo horrid, that they could not liſten to it without ſhrinking. Will the Houſe then (ſaid he) ſanction enormities, the bare recital of which is ſufficient to make them ſhudder? Let them remember that Humanity conſiſts not in a ſqueamiſh ear. It conſiſts not in ſtarting or ſhrinking at ſuch tales as theſe, but in a diſpoſition of heart to relieve miſery, and to prevent the repetition of cruelty. Humanity, he obſerved, appertained rather to the mind, than to the nerves; and it would prompt men to uſe real and diſintereſted endeavours, to give happineſs to their fellow creatures. Here in England ſuch was our indignation at every act of injuſtice, that a Highwayman, a Pickpoket, or even a Pilferer, was, by law, condemned to death; ſo jealous were we, in caſes where our own property was concerned: but we permitted to go unpuniſhed, *Crimes committed in conſequence of the Slave-Trade*, in compariſon with which, the criminal practices of England were innocence itſelf. What was the conſequence of this? We unſettled the principles of Juſtice, in the minds of men, and we deprived the Legiſlature of that ſtrong influence which it ought to derive from it's known integrity, and from it's uniform conſiſtency of conduct. It was as important therefore, in ſound policy, as it was in point of juſtice and

honour

honour, to aboliſh a Trade which diſcredited our Morals and Police at home, as well as our National Character abroad. For what could any man think, either of our juſtice or conſiſtency, who ſhould ſee a man that had picked a pocket going to be hanged for the crime, while all the enormities which had been perpetrated in Africa, and all the other cruelties now in evidence before the Houſe, were known not only to paſs off with impunity, but while the continuance of them was permitted by a vote of the Britiſh Parliament?

It was ſaid, however, that the Africans were leſs happpy at home than in the Iſlands, and that we were therefore juſtified in carrying them away; but what right had we to be the judges of this, or to force upon them a new condition? "However unhappy in your opinion (they might ſay to us) yet we wiſh for the comforts that are around us, the ſocial relations of life, the liberty of our native, though uncultivated, plains; and you have no right to change, nay even to better, our condition." But it was ridiculous to plead that we *bettered* their condition, when we dragged them from every thing that was dear in life, and reduced them to the moſt abject ſtate of Slavery.

One argument indeed had been uſed, by an Honourable Alderman, in the way of commercial policy, which, for a ſubject ſo grave, was rather too ridiculous. The Slave-Trade (ſaid the Honourable Alderman) was neceſſary, on account of the ſupport it gave to our Fiſheries, for that the Newfonndland Trade depended on the Slaves, for the conſumption of a vaſt quantity of Refuſe Fiſh, for which there would otherwiſe be no vent. What was this but to ſay, That the Slave-Trade muſt be kept up, with all it's enormities, in order that there might be Perſons to eat up the refuſe fiſh that was too bad for any body elſe to eat!!

It had been ſaid, that England ought not to Aboliſh the Trade, unleſs France, Spain, and Holland, would alſo give it up. Mr. Fox ſaid, that, if it was a Trade founded in violence and injuſtice, Great Britain ought to waſh her hands of it, at any rate; nor was the practice of other countries any thing at all to the queſtion. It was as if a perſon addicted to felony, but now conſcious of his paſt guilt, ſhould ſay, "There is a man now

whom I have an opportunity of robbing on the highway; I am extremely ſorry to do it, for I am become fully ſenſible of the guilt, but I know that if *I* ſhould not rob him, there is another highwayman, half a mile farther on the road, who certainly will, and thus *he* will get the man's purſe inſtead of *myſelf*." Mr. Fox reprobated ſuch reaſoning, in terms of manly indignation, obſerving, that mere Gain was not a motive for a great country to reſt on, as a juſtification of any meaſure. It was not the firſt purpoſe of a well regulated Government: Honour was it's ſuperior, as much as Juſtice was ſuperior to Honour.

With regard to the Emancipation of the Negroes already in Slavery, his own doubts of the efficacy of an act of the Britiſh Legiſlature for this purpoſe, was a reaſon for not entering into it. He himſelf did not think ſuch a meaſure could be ſuddenly ventured upon; and though every man had a right to freedom, yet it ſhould be obſerved, that men inured to Slavery all their lives, felt certainly leſs degraded by it, than thoſe who were born to independence.——It might be dangerous to give freedom at once to a man uſed to Slavery, on the ſame ground as, in the caſe of a man who had never ſeen day light, there might be danger of blinding him, if you were to expoſe him all at once to the full glare of the ſun.

Mr. Fox condemned exceedingly, the arrogance of the notion, that all the inhabitants of Africa, had minds, inferior to ourſelves—How did we know, that ſuch was the caſe?---Why might there not be men in Africa, of as fine feelings as ourſelves, of as enlarged underſtandings, and as manly in their minds as any of us. He then mentioned the caſe of an African captain, who heard in the night, ſome violent groanings, which had cauſed a diſturbance in his ſhip. There was among his Slaves, one perſon of very conſiderable conſequence, a man, once high in military ſtation, with a mind, not inſenſible to the eminence of his rank, who having been taken captive in battle, was ſold to the ſlave-ſhips, and laid promiſcuouſly with the reſt. Happening in the night, to obtain room to ſtretch his weary limbs, at rather more eaſe than uſual, he had fallen faſt aſleep, and he dreamed that he was in his own country, high in honour and in command, careſſed by his family and friends, waited on by his domeſtics,

domeſtics, and ſurrounded with all his former comforts in life--- when, awaking ſomewhat ſuddenly, he found himſelf faſtened down in the hold of a ſlave-ſhip, and was heard to burſt into loud groans and lamentations on the miſerable contraſt of his preſent ſtate, mixed with the meaneſt of his ſubjects, and ſubjected to the inſolence of wretches, a thouſand times lower than himſelf, in every kind of endowment. Mr. Fox appealed to the Houſe, whether this was not as moving a picture of the miſerable effects of the Slave-Trade, as any that could be imagined. There was one way, and it was an extremely good one, by which any man might come to a judgment on theſe points--- Let him make the caſe his own. What, ſaid he, ſhould any one of *us*, who are members of this Houſe, ſay, and how ſhould we feel if conquered and carried away, by a tribe as ſavage, as our countrymen on the coaſt of Africa, ſhew themſelves to be? How ſhould we brook the ſame indignities, or bear the ſame treatment ourſelves, which we do not ſcruple to inflict *on them.* Having made this appeal to the feelings of the Houſe, Mr. Fox proceeded to obſerve, that great ſtreſs had been laid on the countenance that was given to Slavery, by the Chriſtian Religion. So far was this from being true, that he thought, one of the moſt ſplendid triumphs of Chriſtianity, was, it's having cauſed Slavery to be ſo generally aboliſhed, as ſoon as ever it appeared in the world. One obvious ground on which it did this, was by teaching us, That in the ſight of their Maker, all mankind are equal. The ſame effect might be expected alſo from the general principles which it taught. It's powerful influence, appeared to have done more in this reſpect, than all the ancient ſyſtems of philoſophy; though even in them, in point of theory, we might trace great liberality and conſideration for human rights. Where, he ſaid, could be found finer ſentiments of liberty, than in the works of Demoſthenes and Cicero? Where ſhould we meet with more bold aſſertions of the rights of mankind, and the dignity of human nature, than in the hiſtorians Tacitus and Thucydides? It was remarkable however, that theſe great men kept Slaves in their houſes, and permitted a whole order of Slaves, to exiſt in their country--- He knew, indeed, that, what he had been aſcribing to Chriſtianity

tianity, ſome imputed to the advances which philoſophy had made. Each of the two parties took the merit to itſelf; the Divine gave it to religion, the Philoſopher to philoſophy. He ſhould not diſpute with either of them; but as both coveted the praiſe, why ſhould they not emulate each other, in promoting this improvement in the condition of the human race?

Mr. Fox, having drawn his argument, on the general queſtion, to a concluſion, wiſhed, he ſaid, to give an anſwer to an Honourable Baronet over the way (Sir Archibald Edmondſtone) who had aſked, What was meant to be done by the Honourable Mover, if the preſent queſtion for leave to bring in a bill ſhould be carried? Mr. Fox ſaid, that he conceived the intention of the Honourable Mover, undoubtedly was, To bring in a Bill for aboliſhing the Slave-Trade, *immediately*; but that, the forms of the Houſe made it neceſſary, the time ſhould be left in blank, and that the blank might be filled up, by naming any period of one, two, three, or four years, as the Houſe might think expedient; ſo that there was no reaſon, why the Honourable Baronet, or any other Gentleman, who objected to ſo immediate an Abolition, ſhould not, in this inſtance, vote with him. Mr. Fox paid ſome compliments to the Honourable Gentleman who introduced the motion, ſaying, that he had fully intended to make a motion, for leave to bring in a bill of the ſame nature; but that he was extremely happy, it had fallen into better hands. He declared, that the whole country, and indeed, the whole civilized world muſt rejoice, that ſuch a bill had been moved for, not merely as a matter of humanity, but as an act of mere Juſtice, and nothing elſe: for he would put humanity wholly out of the caſe. He aſked, could it be called humanity to forbear from committing murder? Exactly upon this ground did the preſent motion ſtand, *being ſtrictly a queſtion of National Juſtice.*

Mr. Fox obſerved, it could not be ſuppoſed, that he had been induced on the preſent occaſion, to lend his aſſiſtance by any perſonal conſiderations, and he aſſured the friends to the Abolition, that, *in whatever ſituation he might ever be, his warmeſt efforts ſhould be uſed in promoting the ſame cauſe.*

He

Mr. Fox added, he rejoiced that the Honourable Mover had ſo ſtrongly pledged himſelf, to purſue his object till it was accompliſhed, and he declared, in the moſt unqualified terms, that the Honourable Gentleman ſhould never find him fail in coming forward to give his beſt aſſiſtance.

The Strangers were ordered to withdraw.

The Gallery being cleared, and a loud cry kept up a conſiderable time for the queſtion, Mr. J. T. STANLEY, who had been attempting to ſpeak, ſat down, and Mr. PITT ſpoke to order. He ſaid, there might be, and he believed there were, ſome Gentlemen who could not anſwer it to themſelves, to forbear expreſſing their opinions on ſo extraordinary occaſion as the preſent. He hoped, therefore, he ſhould not offend any Gentleman by particularly inſiſting, that the Bar ſhould be cleared, and that the name of any Gentleman who interrupted the Houſe by his voice ſhould be taken down by the Chairman, as the only means of ſecuring to every Member that undoubted right which he had of delivering his ſentiments.

Mr. STANLEY at length roſe again, and ſaid, that he came into the Houſe purpoſing to vote againſt the Abolition, but that the impreſſion made, both on his underſtanding and his feelings, was ſuch as he could not reſiſt; and he was now convinced, that the entire Abolition of the Slave-Trade was called for equally by ſound policy and juſtice. He thought it right and fair to avow manfully this change in his opinions, in conſequence of what he had heard. The Abolition, he was ſure, could not long fail to be carried: the arguments for it were indeed irreſiſtible.

The Honourable Mr. RYDER ſaid, he came to the Houſe, not exactly in the circumſtances of the Honourable Gentleman who had juſt ſpoken, but very much undecided on the ſubject; that he, however, was ſo ſtrongly convinced by the arguments he had heard, that he was become equally earneſt for the Abolition, and would moſt heartily give his Vote for it.

Mr.

Mr. SMITH (Member for Pontefract) ſaid, that he ſhould not trouble the Houſe at ſo late an hour farther than to enter his *proteſt in the moſt ſolemn manner he poſſibly could, againſt this Trade which he conſidered as contrary to Juſtice, and moſt diſgraceful to the country.*

Sir W. YOUNG declared, he was not convinced by any thing that had paſſed at all to change his opinion; that he thought his own ſide of the queſtion was the ſide of true humanity; and he was as conſcientiouſly convinced of it, as it was poſſible for any man to be.

Mr. SUMNER declared himſelf againſt the total, immediate, and unqualified Abolition, which he thought would wound at leaſt the prejudices of the Weſt Indians, and might do miſchief, but a gradual Abolition, he ſaid, he ſhould much wiſh to ſee.

Major SCOTT declared he could not poſſibly give a ſilent vote on ſo momentous a queſtion, and particularly after what had been ſaid of thoſe who ſhould diſſent from the Motion. He declared there was no Member in the Houſe who could give a more independent and honeſt vote upon the queſtion than himſelf. He had no ſort of concern either in the African or Weſt India Trade, farther than an acquaintance with many very reſpectable Weſt India Merchants, which could not poſſibly bias his judgment. He ſaid, that he had read the evidence with the utmoſt care, and had heard all that had been ſaid upon it; but in the preſent alarming ſtate of the Finances of this Country, he was clearly of opinion that it would be a moſt dangerous experiment indeed, to riſque any one part of our foreign commerce. As far as regulation could go, he would moſt heartily join, and was confident that the enquiries of the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) had produced many very beneficial effects; but a total and immediate Abolition of the Slave-

Trade

Trade, ſtruck him as a very dangerous experiment. Let the Trade be regulated, and as population increaſed in the Weſt Indies, the African Trade would aboliſh itſelf.

Mr. BURKE ſaid, that he had for a long time had his mind drawn to the Slave Trade; that he had even prepared ſome meaſures for it's regulation, conceiving the immediate Abolition of it (though highly deſirable) to be then hardly a thing that could be hoped for; but when he found the Honourable Mover was bringing forward the preſent queſtion, which he approved much more than his own, he had burnt his paper and made an offering of them, in honour of the propoſition o the Honourable Gentleman, much in the ſame manner as we read, that the curious books were offered up and burnt at the approach of the Goſpel. He rejoiced at the ſubmiſſion to reaſon and argument which Gentlemen, who came in with minds ſomewhat prejudiced, had avowed on that day. They thereby told their conſtituents, as they ought to tell them, that it was impoſſible for them, if ſent to hear diſcuſſion in the Houſe of Commons, to avoid ſurrendering up their hearts and judgments to the cauſe in queſtion, however they might have been taught before hand to come prejudiced againſt it.

Mr. DRAKE ſpoke ſtrongly againſt the Abolition. He came into the Houſe, he ſaid, with an unimpaſſioned vacancy of head and heart, but with all his might he would oppoſe the queſtion. We had by want of temperance and of prudent conduct loſt America. He ſaid the Houſe ſhould beware of being carried away by the meteors they had been dazzled with. The Leaders, it was true, were for the Abolition; but the minor orators, the dwarfs, the pigmies, he truſted, would this day carry the queſtion againſt them. The property of the Weſt Indians was at ſtake, and though men might be generous of their own property, they ſhould not be ſo with the property of others.

Lord SHEFFIELD, in ſtrong terms, reprobated the overbearing language that had been uſed by ſome Gentlemen, towards others who differed in opinion from them on a matter of ſo great difficulty and ſo much doubt as this, and ſaid it was not the way to convince him. He proteſted againſt a debate in which he could trace nothing like reaſon, but on the contrary downright phrenzy, raiſed perhaps by the moſt extraordinary eloquence; yet he was ſatisfied he could at any other time demonſtrate that the Abolition, as propoſed, was impracticable, and that the attempt would be productive of the greateſt miſchief. He denied the right of the Britiſh Legiſlature to paſs ſuch a law. He turned to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and warned him, that the day on which the Bill ſhould paſs into a law, would be the worſt he had ever ſeen. It would hamper him more than his Spaniſh or Ruſſian War, or a War with all Europe, in as much as a Civil War was more terrible than all other Wars.

Mr. MILNES declared, that he adopted all thoſe expreſſions againſt the Slave-Trade which were thought ſo harſh by the Noble Lord; and inſinuated that his opinion had been turned by his being Member for Briſtol. He quoted a paſſage from Lord Sheffield's Pamphlet, and inſiſted, that the ſeparation of families, there complained of by the Noble Lord, ought to affect his mind as a crying evil in the Weſt Indies, as well as in Africa, and that he ought, on his own grounds, as ſtated in his Pamphlet, to take the contrary ſide of the queſtion.

Lord SHEFFIELD replied, that his opinion had always been the ſame, and that the Honourable Gentleman miſunderſtood what he had been reading. He wiſhed the condition of the Negroes in the Weſt Indies to be meliorated as much as any man, but to be done with juſtice and good ſenſe; and through the medium of the Weſt India Aſſemblies, who alone could do it.

Mr.

Mr. WILBERFORCE made a ſhort reply to ſome arguments uſed in the courſe of the debate, and at half paſt three o'clock the Houſe divided.

NOES	——	——	163
AYES	——	——	88
Majority againſt the Abolition			75

ERRATUM.

Page 63, line 13, from the top, after "and" inſert "in conſequence of."

Some minute Errata beſides may have eſcaped detection; but none, it is hoped, that can mar the ſenſe, or which the reader himſelf may not eaſily correct.

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